



THE END OF AN ERA?

Robert Mugabe and a Conflicting Legacy

EDITED BY

Munyaradzi Mawere, Ngonidzashe Marongwe, & Fidelis Peter Thomas Duri



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List of Contributors

Munyaradzi Mawere is a Professor in the Simon Muzenda School of Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies at Great Zimbabwe University in Zimbabwe. He holds a PhD in Social Anthropology, Master's Degree in Social Anthropology, Master's Degree in Development Studies, Master's Degree in Philosophy, a B. A (Hons) Degree in Philosophy and several professional certificates. Before joining this university, Professor Mawere was a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe and at Universidade Pedagógica, Mozambique, where he has worked in different capacities as a Senior Lecturer, Assistant Research Director, Postgraduate Co-ordinator, and Professor. He is an author of more than 70 books and over 330 academic publications with a focus on Africa straddling the following areas: poverty and development, African philosophy, society and culture, democracy, politics of food production, humanitarianism and civil society organisations, urban anthropology, existential anthropology, cultural philosophy, area studies, experimental philosophy, environmental anthropology, society and politics, decoloniality and African studies. Some of his bestselling books are: *Humans, Other Beings and the Environment: Harurwa (Edible stinkbugs) and Environmental Conservation in South-eastern Zimbabwe* (2015); *Theory, Knowledge, Development and Politics: What Role for the Academy in the Sustainability of Africa?* (2016); *Democracy, Good Governance and Development in Africa: A Search for Sustainable Democracy and Development*, (2015); *Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Development in Africa: Reviving Interconnections for Sustainable Development* (2014); *Myths of Peace and Democracy? Towards Building Pillars of Hope, Unity and Transformation in Africa* (2016); *Harnessing Cultural Capital for Sustainability: A Pan Africanist Perspective* (2015); *Divining the Future of Africa: Healing the Wounds, Restoring Dignity and Fostering Development*, (2014); *African Cultures, Memory and Space: Living the Past Presence in Zimbabwean Heritage* (2014); *Violence, Politics and Conflict Management in Africa: Envisioning Transformation, Peace and Unity in the Twenty-First Century* (2016); *African Philosophy and Thought Systems: A Search for a Culture and Philosophy of Belonging* (2016); *Africa at the Crossroads: Theorising Fundamentalisms in the 21st Century* (2017); *Colonial Heritage, Memory and Sustainability in Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects*

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Fidelis Peter Thomas Duri is a Senior Lecturer of History in the Department of Archaeology, Culture and Heritage, History and Development Studies at Great Zimbabwe University. He is a holder of a PhD in History from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. He has published a number of books and articles which focus on environmental history, socio-cultural dynamics, subaltern struggles, African border studies, and Zimbabwe's socio-political landscape during the colonial and post-colonial periods. In addition to reviewing a number of scholarly articles, he has also edited books such as *Resilience Amid Adversity: Informal Coping Mechanisms to the Zimbabwean Crisis during the New Millennium* (2016) and *Contested Spaces, Restrictive Mechanisms and Corridors of Opportunity: A Social History of Zimbabwean Borderlands and Beyond since the Colonial Period* (2018). He is also a member of the editorial boards of international journals which include the *Zimbabwe Journal of Historical Studies* and the *International Journal of Developing Societies*.

Ngonidzashe Marongwe is a Lecturer in the History and Development Studies Department, Simon Muzenda School of Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies, Great Zimbabwe University located in Masvingo City, Zimbabwe. He holds a PhD in African History from the University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa. He is a past Andrew Mellon Foundation Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Humanities Research, UWC (2009–2010 & 2012); and a SEPHIS fellow at the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore,

India (2011). His research interests include African governance, political violence, gender, military history and terrorism. Ngonidzashe has edited several books such as *Myths of Peace and Democracy: Towards Building Pillars of Hope, Unity and Transformation in Africa* (2016); *Violence, Politics and Conflict Management in Africa: Envisioning Transformation, Peace and Unity in the Twenty-First Century* (2016); and *Contested Spaces, Restrictive Mechanisms and Corridors of Opportunity: A Social History of Zimbabwean Borderlands and Beyond since the Colonial Period* (2018).

Munoda Marariki is an *Alma Mater Studiorum* of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) where he was student leader in the Student Representative Council (SRC) in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts and a BSc Special Honours degree in Sociology. Munoda is a holder of a Diploma in Personnel Management and various certificates in Training and Human Capital Development. He gained post-graduate qualifications at the University of Central England in Birmingham - PG Diploma in Management Studies [DMS] & Master's in Business Administration, [MBA]. Munoda holds post-graduate qualifications in Teaching in Higher Education from University of Northampton and a Diploma in Higher Education from University of London at St Georges. He read for his Doctorate in the Department of Law and Politics at London Middlesex University – where he sharpened his perceptions towards African politics. He remains a stoic fighter against imperialism, neo-colonialism and economic sanctions. Munoda is a Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy. His *areas of focus* are: Political Sociology, Liberation struggle politics, brain drain & labour migration, diasporic transitions and Decolonial critical theory.

Oliver Mtapuri is a Professor in Development Studies in the School of Built Environment and Development, College of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), Durban South Africa. He has a PhD in Development studies (UKZN) and an MBA degree from the University of Zimbabwe. He is an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. Mtapuri's areas of research interest include poverty, redistribution and inequality, community-based tourism, public employment programmes,

research methodologies, financial management, climate change and project management.

Tapuwa Raymond Mubaya is a Lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University's Simon Muzenda School of Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies and a PhD Candidate at Tilburg University, Netherlands. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in Heritage Studies and a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Philosophy both from the University of Zimbabwe. Mr. Mubaya co-edited and co-authored five books and over 30 publications comprising book chapters and journal articles in internationally renowned journals and publishing houses. Besides, Mr. Mubaya played a pivotal role in co-authoring more than 25 books straddling various subjects and fields such as Heritage Studies, Guidance and Counselling and Visual and Performing Arts for the approved new primary and secondary curriculum. Before joining the Great Zimbabwe University, Mr. Mubaya worked for the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) for more than eight years as both the Curator in charge and the head of the Great Zimbabwe Monuments Conservation Department before joining the Great Zimbabwe University.

Martin Musengi is Associate Professor of Deaf, Special Needs and Inclusive Education at Great Zimbabwe University where he is currently Chairperson of the Jairos Jiri Centre for Special Needs Education. He holds B. Ed (Special Needs Education), M. Ed (Educational Psychology) degrees from the University of Zimbabwe and a PhD (Deaf Education) from the University of the Witwatersrand. He taught in a special school for the deaf for 15 years before becoming a specialist teacher-educator initially in a teachers' college (4 years) and then at Great Zimbabwe University where he has been teaching for the past 13 years. In 2009 he was a Fulbright scholar studying bilingual education at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. He was co-principal investigator in a national *Situation Analysis of Community Based Rehabilitation in Zimbabwe* (2016) that was commissioned by Christofell Blinden Mission (CBM) for the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. He has published more than 20 empirical studies in the field of Deaf and Inclusive Education as

well as Zimbabwean Sign Language and has edited two books and authored 16 book chapters.

Nkwazi Mhango is author of *Saa ya Ukombozi, Nyuma ya Pazia, Souls on Sale, Born with Voice, Africa Reunite or Perish, Africa's Best and Worst Presidents: How Imperialism Maintained Venal Regimes in Africa, Psalm of the Oppressed, Perpetual Search, Dependency: Can Africa Still Turn Things Around for the Better?* and *Is It Global War on Terrorism' or Global War over Terra Africana?: The Ruse Imperial Powers Use to Occupy Africa Militarily for Economic Gains*; member of Writers' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (WANL) St. John's NL Canada and is an alumnus of Universities of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Winnipeg and Manitoba (Canada) majoring in Conflict Resolution and Peace and Conflict Studies and Law. Mhango has also contributed many chapters in various academic books.

Chenjerai Muwaniki is currently a Lecturer in the Adult and Continuing Education Department at Great Zimbabwe University in Masvingo, Zimbabwe (2010 to date). He has previously taught at the Midlands State University. He is currently studying for a PhD in Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa. He holds a BSc Honours Degree in Sociology from the University of Zimbabwe, Diploma in Training Management from IPMZ, Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education from Great Zimbabwe University and a Master of Adult Education from the University of Limpopo. His research interests are in the areas of Vocational Education, Financial Literacy, Inclusive education and emerging issues in Adult Education. He has authored research articles and book chapters focusing on VET in Zimbabwe, professional development of VET teachers, VET for hearing impaired youth, and curriculum responsiveness in VET.

Tenson Muyambo is an Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) scholar whose research interests are in religion, culture, politics, gender, health, human rights, IKS and development. His interests in these disciplines is to interrogate how the disciplines interface with each other in ensuring not only continued

existence but sustainable existence worth living. He has published, in refereed journals and book chapters, a handful of literature that focuses on the aforesaid themes, particularly with marginalised communities in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. He is currently lecturing at Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University where he teaches a number of courses that speak to research themes cited above.

Edmore Dube has a PhD in Christian-Muslim Dialogue (2003) from the University of Zimbabwe. His Masters of Arts (UZ 1995) was biased towards Islamic Studies, while his Honours dissertation (1993) was on the Remba of Mposi in Mberengwa. He has grappled with the Remba discourse since 1993, and has published three articles on the subject. He has published an equal number on Islam in Africa and continues to research in that area. His interest on justice and peace as pillars of dialogue has seen him working keenly on the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) pastoral letters. He has made one publication in that area and two are still pending. He has also published one article on the injustices of 'Land Tenure in Zimbabwe' in a volume edited Munyaradzi Mawere and Tapuwa Raymond Mubaya, who have been very inspirational to upcoming scholars. He is currently lecturing in Biblical and Islamic Studies at Great Zimbabwe University.

Aaron Rwodzi is a Lecturer in the Department of History (Faculty of Humanities and Social Science) at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ). He has chaired the CUZ Research Board since 2015. He is a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN). His areas of research interest include, but are not limited to, political and social history, democracy, ethnicity and race and culture. Aaron holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) (General) Degree in History and African Politics from the University of South Africa (UNISA), Special Honours Degree in History from the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) and Master of Arts (MA) Degree in African History (UZ). He is a teacher by profession and a holder of a Certificate of Education (CE), having trained as a secondary school teacher at Hillside Teachers' College in Bulawayo. He taught at many schools in Mashonaland West and Manicaland and got promoted to a

substantive post. He is an avid researcher who has attended many history conferences and organised research events and conferences on behalf of CUZ, the latest of which was the International Conference on Migration in February 2018.

Canisius Mwandayi (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at Midlands State University, Zvishavane. His research interests include: Death and After-life, the living world of the Old Testament, and Bible related cultural encounters.

James Hlongwana is a Senior Lecturer of History in the Department of History and Development Studies at Great Zimbabwe University. He holds: MA (Midlands state University); BA Hons (UNISA); BA Gen (UNISA) and Dip.Ed. (UZ). He is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of History at North-West University in South Africa. Hlongwana has written several articles in international journals. His research interests concern conflict and borderland issues.

Elias G. Konyana is a Senior Lecturer and academic researcher in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of the School of Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies at Great Zimbabwe University. He holds a PhD IN Ethics from the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Konyana lectures in Logic, Philosophy of Law and Ethics at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. His research interests are in Ethical Philosophy as he concentrates on unpacking ethical issues entrenched in human endeavours such as religion, culture and law. To date, Konyana has published several articles and presented papers at national, regional and international conferences on the link between ethics, culture and the law in Africa. He is the current Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies and a Non-executive Member of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the African Consortium for Law and Religious Studies (ACLARS).

Tendai Chibaya is a lecturer in the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culture at Great Zimbabwe University. She holds a Bcom (Hons) in Tourism and Hospitality Management and MCom in

Tourism and Hospitality Management (MSU). Currently, she is a PhD candidate at North West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. Her research interests are in tourism management, events management, tourism marketing and religious tourism. She has published several articles in these areas.

Tasara Muguti is a Senior Lecturer in the History, Archaeology and Development Studies Department at Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Economic History, a Master of Arts in African Economic History and a Graduate Certificate in Education, all obtained from the University of Zimbabwe. He is currently a registered PhD Student with UNISA. He has published several book chapters and refereed journal articles to his credit. He is a reviewer for the SAHARA-J: *Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS* and the *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*. His research interests are in Indigenous Knowledge Systems, with special emphasis on African traditional medicine, land reform, human rights, democracy and many other topical issues on contemporary Southern African history.

Genius Tevera is currently a PhD Candidate in Archaeology with Cape Town University, South Africa. She obtained her MA in Heritage Studies from the University of Witwatersrand. Currently she is a Lecturer in Archaeology, Museums and Heritage Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe. Her research interests include but not limited to, heritage, politics and identity, community archaeology and heritage marketing.

Costain Tandi is a Graduate teacher for Advanced level History and Sociology as well as Head of Department (Humanities) at Rufaro High School in Chatsworth, Zimbabwe. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in Development Studies from Midlands State University; Bachelor of Arts 4th year Honours Degree in History from Great Zimbabwe University; Bachelor of Arts General Degree from the University of Zimbabwe; Graduate Certificate in Education from Great Zimbabwe University; An Executive Certificate in Project and Program Monitoring and Evaluation from the University of Zimbabwe; and An Executive Certificate in Project Management

from the University of Zimbabwe. Tandi has more than ten publications and his research interests include but not limited to Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Climate Change and Variability, Rural Poverty, Agriculture and Community Development.

Phanos Matura is a Lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University's School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culture. He is a PhD candidate with Great Zimbabwe University and a holder of an MSc and BSc in Tourism and Hospitality Management from the University of Zimbabwe. He has published many journal articles on Zimbabwean tourism industry issues. His research interests include tourism destination management and marketing, sustainable tourism development, small and medium tourism enterprises marketing and management. Phanos has more than ten years' experience of working in the tourism industry in different capacities. He is a passionate hospitality, tourism and culture practitioner whose desire is to contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe.

Angeline Sithole holds a Bachelors of Arts Honours Degree in Economic History and a Masters of Arts Honours Degree in Development Studies both obtained from Great Zimbabwe University. Her research interests are in the areas of urban, environmental and women history.

Golden Maunganidze is a holder of MSc in Media and Society Studies from Midlands State University (MSU). Maunganidze teaches journalism courses in the department of English and Media Studies at Great Zimbabwe University. Apart from being a lecturer, Maunganidze is an award winning journalist who runs a local newspaper –*TellZim News* that circulates in the Southern Region of Zimbabwe.

Nancy Mazuru is a Lecturer in the Department of History, Archaeology and Development Studies at Great Zimbabwe University. She holds a Master of Science degree in Development Studies from the Women's University in Africa. Currently, she is a

PhD candidate for Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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Robert Mugabe's Conflicted Legacy and the End of an Era?

Ngonidzashe Marongwe & Munyaradzi Mawere

Introduction

Robert Gabriel Mugabe became one of the most recognisable faces in the 21st century across the world. In many ways than one, he became a larger than a life figure. This is not only because of his long reign over Zimbabwe, but also because he has grown into, arguably, one of the most polarising figures in modern times, both within and outside Zimbabwe. Even after his [forced] retirement, the mere mentioning of his name still raises a lot of debate and often times vicious, if not irreconcilable differences, both in Zimbabwe and beyond. Writing in an article titled, “Lessons of Zimbabwe”, Mahmood Mamdani (2008:17) succinctly captures the polarity surrounding the figure, Mugabe, when he wrote:

It is hard to think of a figure more reviled in the West than Robert Mugabe. Liberal and conservative commentators alike portray him as a brutal dictator, and blame him for Zimbabwe's descent into hyperinflation and poverty. The seizure of white-owned farms by his black supporters has been depicted as a form of thuggery, and as a cause of the country's declining production, as if these lands were doomed by black ownership. Sanctions have been imposed, and opposition groups funded with the explicit aim of unseating him. There is no denying Mugabe's authoritarianism, or his willingness to tolerate and even encourage the violent behaviour of his supporters. His policies have helped lay waste the country's economy, though sanctions have played no small part, while his refusal to share power with the country's growing opposition movement, much of it based in the trade unions, has led to a bitter impasse. This view of Zimbabwe's crisis can

be found everywhere, from the *Economist* and the *Financial Times* to the *Guardian* and the *New Statesman*, but it gives us little sense of how Mugabe has managed to survive. For he has ruled not only by coercion but by consent, and his land reform measures, however harsh, have won him considerable popularity, not just in Zimbabwe but throughout Southern Africa.

Mamdani's comment speaks large volumes to Mugabe's conflicted legacy in Zimbabwe and the rest of the international community. This divided opinion of Mugabe can broadly be represented, first, by those who consider him as a hero, champion of African liberation, a Pan-Africanist, a revolutionary and an avid anti-imperialist who literally 'spoke the truth' to the Western imperialists (Smith, 2014). On the other end of the spectrum, there are those who have differentially characterised Mugabe as a rabid black fascist, an anti-white racist, an oppressor, and a dictator in the mould of Idi Amin and Adolf Hitler, who violated people and property rights and as such deserved space and time at the International Criminal Court in Hague for crimes he committed against humanity. Furthermore, Mugabe, in this genre is considered as an example of a "black" African "political pathology" (Jacobs, 2008: 68), the "Black Robespierre", a leader who "drove his [once prosperous] country into the ground" (Laing and Thornycroft, 2011: n.p) and a "living caricature of despotism" (Smith, 2014:n.p). Yet still, there are those who perceive him as good and bad rolled in one, akin to "a fallen angel" (Smith, 2014) because in the early years of his rule he exhibited admirable qualities of a reformer and transformer, who after delivering the country's independence he became a darling for the country and beyond for his pro-poor policies that extended access to social services to the previously disadvantaged and marginalised proletarianised blacks (Holland, 2008). This latter group considers Mugabe's last twenty or so years in power as having been characterised by horrible policies, which nonetheless have to be considered alongside the good ones from the early years of independence as well as a byproduct of the country's violent white colonial past (*Ibid*).

All these differences have, broadly, raised the huge question: How can Mugabe's legacy be evaluated with all the justice it deserves? When extended, to what degree was he a hero, tragic hero or a villain? The argument that emerges from the chapters that constitute this impeccable volume is that trying to evaluate Mugabe's legacy is both an epistemic and a political conundrum that raises conflicted and divisive opinions and it is difficult to transcend the polemics. For many in Zimbabwe, the debate is not only academic but is filled with a lot of political undertones and innuendos that speak to the long running Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) politics. For ZANU-PF, up to the time of Mugabe's inglorious departure from office under the weight of a military backed revolt in ZANU-PF, Mugabe's legacy was revered in saintly terms that presented Mugabe as a God-given gift to Zimbabwe and a "Messiah" to the African race. For all intents and purposes, he was regarded as a demi-God, who could not falter. On the other side of the pendulum, Mugabe was considered in villainous discursive narratives as a leader who wrecked a jewel country by his ruinous socio-economic and politically unsound if not populist policies. From the two meta-narratives, what emerges is that Mugabe was sort of an enigma who cannot be easily forgotten whether for the good or for the bad. Generally, his legacy has been summed up by what has become known as Mugabeism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009), which in itself is also convoluted and contested. This is in terms of its origins, usefulness as a marker of Mugabe's policies, political philosophy and whether or not it ended in ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe with the demise of Robert Mugabe. Regarding the latter, the question that is instructive is, does Mugabeism end with the stepping aside of Mugabe? For this book, the contention is that Mugabeism did not die with the demise of Mugabe's reign, rather, in the first year of his ouster in 2018, Mugabeism was alive and was continued by his successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa. To help the evaluation on Mugabe's legacy, the chapter considers Mugabe's controversial policies such as the unfretted reconciliation policy, democratisation and the treatment of the opposition, the *gukurahundi*, the land reform and his foreign policy.

Mugabe: A personality of resilience, defiance and courage

Robert Gabriel Mugabe was born on 21 February 1924 in the rural village of Kutama in Zvimba District near Chinhoyi in the western part of the then Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, to Gabriel and Bona, his parents. His parents were poor peasants and his father was a village-based carpenter and at times a migrant labourer (Holland, 2008). From these humble beginnings, Robert Mugabe led a life that was characterised by remarkable feats of defiance and courage amid adversity after losing his elder brother and having his father abandon his family at a very early age (Smith, 2014). He studied at Kutama Mission for both his primary and secondary education under the guidance and financial support of Catholic Jesuit Missionaries (Holland, 2008). Later, Mugabe studied for a teaching degree with Fort Hare University in South Africa specialising in English and History (*Ibid*). Upon completing the degree, he served as a teacher in both colonial Zimbabwe, northern Rhodesia (now Malawi) and Ghana. Mugabe was rumoured to have acquired up to seven degrees (Laing and Thornycroft, 2011). It was while in Ghana that he married his first wife, Sally Heyfron and was converted deeper into Marxism and Socialism under the tutelage of the first President of the Republic of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, which would greatly shape his political future (*Ibid*). Upon his return in 1960, Mugabe joined African anti-colonial nationalist movements beginning with joining the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) that was led by Joshua Nkomo up to 1963 when ZAPU split with the formation of ZANU that was led by Ndabaningi Sithole (*Ibid*). In ZAPU, Mugabe served as its Publicity Secretary (Jacobs, 2008). With the formation of ZANU, he became the party's Secretary General. He went on to become the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) leader in 1975 following a palace coup against Ndabaningi Sithole, the then president of ZANU (*Ibid*). This ascendancy was backed by the ZANU's military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) through the Mgagao Declaration. It was reported that Mugabe's rise to power in ZANU was not well-received by some within the party who remained loyal to Sithole and by

Samora Machel, the late former President of Mozambique who was also ZANU's greatest benefactor (Tekere, 2007). As echoed by others like Edgar Tekere (2007), Mugabe was also a hesitant leader who was thrust to the position against his will. He, together with many pioneers of African anti-colonial nationalists, spent many years in incarceration for opposing the settler "white" minority government fronted by the Rhodesia Front (RF) party that was led by the late Prime Minister, Ian Douglas Smith. Regarding Mugabe himself, he spent eleven years in prison for his political activities (Holland, 2008).

In 1980, Mugabe won the first democratic plebiscite in Zimbabwe on the ZANU-PF ticket. His party won 57 of the 80 available seats on the separate black roll (Msipa, 2015). During the electioneering leading up to the watershed 1980 elections, it is suggested that Mugabe survived numerous attempts on his life. He and his ZANU-PF party were also accused of deploying their guerrillas in rural areas to intimidate the rural electorate to vote for them (*Ibid*). After winning the elections in 1980, Mugabe became the first Prime Minister of independent Zimbabwe up to 1987. Upon assuming the office of Prime Minister, he announced the controversial policy of reconciliation that pardoned all for crimes that were committed in the struggle for independence (Jacobs, 2008). The policy of reconciliation also allowed for the consummation of the government of national unity that involved ZANU-PF, Patriotic Front ZAPU and the Rhodesia Front (Mlambo, 2013). With that policy of reconciliation in place, which emphasised drawing a line in the sand regarding past atrocities, Mugabe became a darling of the larger world, especially the Western world, for he had managed a difficult transition from a violent war of independence to bring peace and unity to the country. He assumed the position of President of the Republic of Zimbabwe in 1987 following a unity accord on 22 December 1987 with ZAPU following a harrowing period in the country's Matabeleland and Midlands provinces infamously known as the *gukurahundi* in which up to 20 000 civilians from these provinces were allegedly murdered in the fight between the government and "dissidents" (Catholic Commission for Justice and

Peace (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation, 1999). He held the presidential position until 21 November 2017 when he resigned under pressure from his party, ZANU-PF, the army and some civilians (Marongwe, this volume). Effectively, Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe for an uninterrupted period of 37 years and 7 months (*Ibid*). Below we outline some of Mugabe's policies that help to shape his heritage and controversial legacy. What emerges from the discussion of some of the key pillars of Mugabe's legacy landmarks is that it is a complex undertaking to try to unpack Mugabe's legacy. This complexity is problematised in the chapters that make up this volume, which besides interrogating the instructive question, how can we evaluate Mugabe's legacy with all the justice it deserves, many of the chapters also go ahead to respond to other smaller questions, including: To what degree was Mugabe a hero, tragic hero or a villain to the people of Zimbabwe and Africa? Without necessarily disparaging or unnecessarily celebrating the persona of Mugabe *per se*, the chapters conscientiously and academically interrogate issues around Mugabe's contribution to the [under]development of Zimbabwe, especially in the post-independence period.

The policy of reconciliation

One of the first known and implemented of Mugabe's post-independence policies was the policy of reconciliation that he announced on his inauguration as the country's first independence Prime Minister. In announcing reconciliation, Mugabe posited that: "If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights, and duties as myself... If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds me to you" (Mlambo, 2013). To concretise this policy, Mugabe invited the Rhodesia Front, ZAPU and ZANU and alike to form a government of national unity (GNU). The ministry of Home Affairs was given to ZAPU, while agricultural ministry was given to Dennis Norman, a white CFU president to head. The former Rhodesia Front deputy Prime Minister, David Smith, was appointed Minister of Commerce and Industry (*Ibid*). In the security sectors,

Mugabe allowed the Rhodesian army general, Peter Walls, to continue and to oversee the military integration (*Ibid*). Mugabe also kept Ken Flower as head of the country's spy service, the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). The policy, however, had serious challenges. It seemed to favour a reconciliation between indigenous people and "whites", while neglecting the reconciliation of indigenous African groups, especially its failure to reconcile ZANU and ZAPU/ZANLA and ZIPRA, resulting in the country degenerating into the *gukurahundi* episode.

The *gukurahundi*

Related to Mugabe's reconciliation policy, and perhaps as a failure of reconciliation arose *gukurahundi* massacres in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. *Gukurahundi*, in its traditional Shona sense means, the first rains received after the harvest season to clear chaff before the spring rains (Smith, 2014). However, in the Zimbabwean post-colonial sense, it refers to a period of near civil war in parts of the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces that raged between 1982 and 1987 when PF ZAPU and ZANU –PF signed a unity accord to end hostilities and to form one party, the united ZANU-PF led by Robert Mugabe with Simon Muzenda and Joshua Nkomo as the vice presidents (Mlambo, 2013). Under this episode, *gukurahundi*, as Mugabe called it, was a 'moment of madness' (Msipa, 2015) in which Mugabe's government fought a near civil war with so-called dissidents who were derived loosely from disgruntled members of the Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA)¹ elements and super-ZAPU elements drawn from South Africa's destabilisation project in southern African countries called the Front Line States (Msipa, 2015). This destabilisation policy was, in the South African Apartheid discourse, encapsulated as the 'Total strategy' (Marongwe, 2013). During the fighting that ensued, there were several excesses that were recorded against the state security services, including the massacring of up to 20 000 civilians that has been largely blamed on

¹ ZIPRA was the military wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union during Zimbabwe's struggle for independence.

the Zimbabwe National Army's Fifth Brigade whose members were largely trained by North Koreans (CCJP/LRF, 1999). In addition to this, there were massive disappearances and raping of the residents of the said provinces who were suspected to be either leading ZAPU supporters or suspected supporters of the dissidents (*Ibid*). In fact, the *gukurahundi* nearly became a government-led pogrom that was close to ethnic cleansing of the Ndebele-speaking people (Jacobs, 2008). As such, many of Mugabe's opponents from across the country often refer to the *gukurahundi* to portray Mugabe as a heartless ruler who walked on dead bodies to emasculate ZAPU and retain power in Zimbabwe (Sachikonye, 2011). Despite all the excesses experienced during this period, there were very little objections or coverage of the pogrom (Jacobs, 2008). On the contrary, the international community continued to shower Mugabe with accolades, including a knighthood by the British Queen in 1994 and several honorary degrees from across the world (*Ibid*). As Smith (2014:n.p) probably guessed right, this was because the international community "preferred to see an economy that was growing, as agriculture boomed and Mugabe built clinics and schools, turning Zimbabwe into one of the healthiest, best educated and most hopeful countries in Africa."

The Land reform programme

The land reform programme is one of the most debated policies that was implemented by Robert Mugabe either as the Prime Minister or as President of Zimbabwe. Broadly, the land reform programme can be divided into two, the organised phase that ran from 1980 to 1998 and the rather chaotic Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that ran between 1999/2000 and 2003. The orderly phase involved resettling marginalised indigenous Africans on former white commercial farms with the establishment of basic infrastructure preceding the resettlements (Mlambo, 3013). On the other hand, the FTLRP involved the rather partisan and disorderly settling of blacks on white farms before any infrastructure was established and largely in military-style occupations and displacements of the farm owners

without compensation that were led by the country's war of liberation veterans (*Ibid*). In terms of its militarisation, and besides the leading role the war veterans (and other state security personnel) took, the FTLRP was also couched as constitutive of the country's Third Liberation War, code-named the Third Chimurenga (Mugabe, 2001). Of the two phases of resettlement, Mugabe is largely remembered for the latter one not least because of the scale of farm ownership reordering but because of the politicisation of the FTLRP as well as the violations of opponents, including brow beatings and deaths that accompanied it (Scoones, *et al*, 2009; Smith, 2014).

While *gukurahundi* deaths happened largely below the radar of news agencies and/or were "ignored" by the international community and local human rights groups, the harsh treatment of the European settlers farm owners, opposition parties and figures under the FTLRP did not go as largely unnoticed. In fact, the combined effect of the FTLRP pogrom manufactured widespread negative reviews as well as positive rave reviews both within and beyond Zimbabwe. Because of the magnitude of the coverage the reviews received, they generated and sustained controversies of epic proportions. On the one hand, the FTLRP was hailed as a huge success in completing the liberation of Zimbabwean Africans and in giving indigenous Zimbabweans the means of production that they had long lost to the British imperialists (Mamdani, 2008; Moyo and Yeros, 2007; Scoones, *et al*, 2009). On the other hand, the FTLRP and the often violent dealings with the MDC structures drew widespread condemnation as constitutive of ZANU-PF's electioneering and as property and human rights violation (Raftopoulos, 2009). What, however, cannot escape mentioning is that both FTLRP and the targeting of opposition members went alongside each other and often complemented each other, which helped to forge a serious political crisis in the country that worsened an economic crisis and led, among others, to the imposition of 'targeted sanctions' by some Western European countries and the United States of America (USA) (*Ibid*). In an effort to minimise the effects of the 'targeted sanctions', Mugabe and his government embarked on the Look East Policy that sought to redirect the

country's links from the West towards East Asian countries, especially China. Linked to this, Mugabe himself emerged as a chief ideologue of his pogroms through sharpening the indigenous Zimbabwean emancipatory discourse that poured vitriol and scorn against the opposition, especially the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) he caricatured as an imperialist creation, and the United Kingdom and the USA as being at the forefront of efforts to recolonise Zimbabwe (Mugabe, 2001). Mugabe also articulated the FTLRP as pro-poor and pro-Africans (*Ibid*). As a result, Mugabe emerged in some quarters across the world, as the 21st century face of pan-Africanism to many Africans in the diaspora and in many parts of Africa. He also justified the brutalisation of the opposition as part of the Third Chimurenga that was meant to finalise indigenous Zimbabwean emancipation through economically empowering them by giving them land, a key means of production (*Ibid*).

Expansion of social services in health and education

Regarding the expansion of access to social services, especially in health and education, among other sectors, Mugabe is widely credited for uplifting the literacy rates in Zimbabwe by instituting deliberate policies that encouraged increased school enrolment, offering free primary school education in the early 1980s and subsidising secondary and tertiary education (Smith, 2014). In addition, Mugabe's government embarked on the building of schools and this policy resulted in the phenomenal rise of the number of primary schools by a whopping 136,98 per cent, that is from 2401 to 5690 schools from 1980 to 2008, which catapulted enrolment from 819 586 to 2 445 520 in the same period (Government of Zimbabwe, 2008: 4). At the secondary school level, the same success was realised with the sector experiencing a historic growth from 177 to 2182 schools signifying a massive 1132, 77 per cent rise (*Ibid*). This was also translated in the actual enrolment figures, which rose from a paltry 66 215 to 832 487 students in the same period (*Ibid*). The same remarkable success was recorded in the tertiary education sector

where by November 2017, there were fourteen universities in the country up from one in 1980. On the whole, Mugabe's education policies made Zimbabwe one of the countries with the highest literacy rates in Africa and beyond, though the last two decades of Mugabe's reign witnessed a dramatic deterioration of standards in the education sector throughout the country.

Alongside the democratisation of access of education was the expansion of access to primary health care in largely indigenous African dominated areas. The starting point was the integration of the two tier and racialised health care system, which existed during the colonial period that divided access to health services between blacks and whites (Government of Zimbabwe, n.d.). Mugabe's government also deliberately expanded the provision of access to health care by establishing more referral hospitals and by building more clinics in the rural areas and urban high density areas that were dominated by blacks (*Ibid*). The state also repaired clinics and hospitals that had been damaged during the war of liberation (*Ibid*). To this end, and for example, Mugabe's government "repaired 161 clinics which had been damaged by the war, built 163 new health centres and upgraded another 450 primary health care facilities throughout the country in the first four years of independence" (*Ibid*: n.d.). Furthermore, training facilities for nurses, environmental health workers, pharmacists and doctors were increased throughout the country. For example, the figure was raised to two for doctors and numerous for nurses at both government and private institutions for nurses (*Ibid*). This was in addition to the various programmes that either sent Zimbabwean students to train at foreign institutions or the hiring of foreign medical personnel from countries such as Cuba. In addition, the government scored successes in the area of the immunisation of children against killer diseases (*Ibid*). On the whole, the health policies helped to extend health services to previously unserved areas or sections of the population, though the last two decades of Mugabe's reign saw a dramatic falling down of standards in the health sector across the country.

Treatment of opposition

An evaluation of Mugabe's legacy cannot be complete without a discussion of how opposition from opposing civil societies, party leaders and their supporters were treated under Mugabe's leadership. Many a time, political opponents complained of the harsh treatment they received from Mugabe's government. This treatment was used against opponents like Bishop Abel Muzorewa of the United African National Congress (UANC), Ndabaningi Sithole of the ZANU party and the founding leader of Mugabe's ZANU-PF in 1963, Joshua Nkomo of PF ZAPU and Edgar Tekere of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) (Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000). In the new millennium, the harsh treatment of opposition leaders was largely felt by the late Morgan Richard Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), arguably the largest and best achieving of all opposition parties in the country (*Ibid*). On the whole, this harsh management of the opposition was blamed for the lack of adequate democratisation in the country. This is largely so because the violations of the rights of the political opponents and parties have been linked to the desire to perpetuate the stranglehold of ZANU-PF on state levers and the elimination of the opposition. To this end, we could refer to the case of Nkomo who suffered a lot of violent and humiliating treatment from the state leading to his escape wearing a dress to Botswana and who only returned following the consummation of the ZANU-PF and ZAPU government of national unity in 1987 (Nkomo, 1984). In addition to the above, some civil society organisations were on many occasions on the receiving end of Mugabe's governing policies since the early years of independence (Moyo, 1992). This was in line with the attempts by Mugabe and ZANU-PF's desire to muzzle dissenting voices and create a civil society that aligned itself with ZANU-PF (*Ibid*). Recently, some political society organisations such as Occupy Africa Unity Square led by Itai Dzamara, Tajamuka and #ThisFlag also suffered a lot of violations (Marongwe, forthcoming).

Nepotism

Nepotism was also a hallmark of Mugabe's reign. This is because Mugabe was also accused in many quarters of open nepotism for appointing his close relatives at differing moments into key government departments, into very high ZANU-PF party, state offices and into crucial state security institutions and parastatals. The close relatives from both his and his wife Grace's sides and/or his homeboys (that is those from close to his rural home of Zvimba), included his nephew Patrick Zhuwao whom he appointed as either Deputy Minister or Minister for long periods. Moreso, Mugabe ostensibly tried to make his wife, Grace, the ZANU-PF Vice-President through brutal purges of sitting Vice-Presidents beginning with Joice Mujuru in 2014 and Emmerson Mnangagwa in 2017. As well, there are many other names of people whom he also appointed or forced their elevation such as his sister Sabina Mugabe, Patrick Zhuwawo's mother and Patrick's brother Leo, who were at one time Members of Parliament. In addition, there were many others that we cannot name because we do not have full proof yet of their relationship with the former President. The appointments went alongside access to primitive accumulation privileges, including accessing farms and lucrative government contracts.

Foreign Policy

Another area that generates a lot of debate on Mugabe's legacy is his foreign policy as analysed against the former colonial master, Britain, and more generally with the Western powers including the United States of America and many western European states. In his early years, Mugabe's foreign policy was regarded as friendly and intended to create amity meant to accrue for the international support for the country's social services expansion programmes. From 2000 onwards, the foreign policy shifted radically and it became rather radical and more confrontational against the West. This was largely based on the controversial Fast Track Land Reform Programme

(FTLRP). As noted earlier, the FTLRP was undergirded by its chaotic, violent and spontaneous nature.

Largely because it was the “European” settler farmers who lost land under the FTLRP, it was the Western countries that were at the forefront of criticising Robert Mugabe and his government over the farm takeovers and were the ones that imposed the so-called targeted sanctions against Mugabe and his close allies and their businesses.

The journey through the book

The present volume has been contributed to by scholars across disciplines owing to the controversy of Mugabe’s personality and his mix of politics with other realms of life such as economics, health, education and culture, among others. Ngonidzashe Marongwe’s Chapter 2 meticulously discusses how hate language, which became a bane whenever the former First Lady, Grace Mugabe, was afforded a platform, especially at ZANU-PF rallies or gatherings, contributed to the demise of her husband and former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. As noted by Marongwe, the hate language campaign by Grace Mugabe was largely directed at the country’s two former Vice Presidents, Joice Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa at two specific junctures in 2014 and 2017, respectively. These attacks against the former Vice Presidents led to the attacks of those that were thought or known to be their supporters. Citing Simbi Mubako (2017: np), Marongwe argues that through these acerbic and undiplomatic attacks of the country’s leading figures, “Grace brought down Mugabe from State House as surely as Eve brought down Adam in the Garden of Eden.” This was because her hateful speeches led to the ouster of Mujuru and later Mnangagwa, together with their supporters in both ZANU-PF and government, which almost paralysed the operations of ruling ZANU-PF and government functions. That led, largely to ZANU-PF and the government being diverted from their duties to serve the people of Zimbabwe who were, in the majority of cases wallowing in abject poverty that was born out of lack of employment opportunities and government dereliction of duty. A critical point that Marongwe points out is that

the hate language campaign also targeted state security institutions, especially the military top brass that would eventually launch a military operation code named “Operation Restore Legacy” in November 2017 that became the *coup de grace* in the ouster of Mugabe. The essence of the chapter is well captured in his introduction when he points out that:

Grace Mugabe-led pogrom generated a lot of anxiety, uncertainty, divisions and dissonance within ZANU-PF as she worked through and widened the gap between the different factions in ZANU-PF. Added to this, Grace Mugabe created a lot of enemies for herself and her husband, fomented violence against the targets. As well, she alienated President Mugabe from his trusted lieutenants such as former Vice President Mnangagwa and former army chief General Constantino Chiwenga, widely thought to have engineered President Robert Mugabe’s re-election in 2008, and the larger military body. She also estranged Mugabe from the country’s Second Chimurenga veterans, the foot soldiers of the so-called Third Chimurenga of the early years of the new millennium that was characterised by violent and uncompensated farm take-overs of white-owned farms. More importantly, the undiplomatic and denigrating speeches by the then Zimbabwe’s president were directly linked to the fall of President Robert Mugabe from power as they led to the direct intervention of the army in ZANU-PF succession.

Notwithstanding the above, Marongwe accepts the contribution by other factors in the fall of Mugabe such as the growing dislike of Mugabe, worsening unemployment levels and poverty, the Zimbabwe Defence Forces-led ‘Operation Restore Legacy’, the parliamentary impeachment proceedings and the huge demonstrations against Mugabe in November 2017.

In Chapter 3, Canisius Mwandayi critically interrogates Robert Mugabe’s convoluted relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Mwandayi begins by tracking Mugabe’s early life and how it was influenced by the Catholic Jesuit missionaries at Kutama Mission. Following that early influence, Mugabe became a devout Catholic who regularly attended important Roman Catholic Church functions and became a devout adherent who rarely missed church services and

functions such as receiving mass. Despite all these traits, the Catholic Church regularly voiced concern at Mugabe's flows and undemocratic tendencies against Zimbabweans. These undemocratic excesses that the Catholic Church raised against Mugabe included the *gukurahundi* massacres in parts of Matabeleland and Midlands provinces between 1982 and 1987. Furthermore, the Catholic Church also periodically wrote damning pastoral letters condemning Mugabe and his government excesses against the citizens of the country. In the end, while Mugabe at times retorted back in equally harsh terms to the church's publications, he never dissociated from the church. In the same vein, despite condemning Mugabe for certain human rights violations, the church on its part, also never excommunicated Mugabe. Mwandayi posited that through not defrocking Mugabe, the "Catholic Church demonstrated what 'true Christianity' is all about", the ability to forgive. To this end, Mwandayi cites Lewis (1949:182) who posited that "to be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."

Chapter 4 by James Hlongwana critically explores the influence of both domestic and regional factors in its examination of the downfall of Mugabe. Specifically, the chapter interrogates the respective roles that were played by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), the Zimbabwean Parliament, the generality of Zimbabweans, especially the urbanites, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in either fomenting and/or celebrating a 'coup' that removed Mugabe from power. Further, the chapter discusses the motivational reasons for the wild celebrations by Zimbabweans over the downfall of Mugabe. The central thesis to Hlongwana's chapter is that "while Mugabe's resignation was precipitated by the intervention of the ZDF before the Zimbabwean Parliament had instituted impeachment proceedings against him, the greater part of the international community generally approved of the 'coup' since it had deposed a tyrant who had become a liability to Zimbabwe, Southern Africa and the world at large."

Aaron Rwodzi's Chapter 5 audaciously grapples with the intervention and involvement of the Mugabe government on the

gukurahundi atrocities in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces between 1982 and 1987. The *gukurahundi* episode is a topic that is hotly contested and emotive one both academically and politically. Critically, it was one area a few dared to discuss or write on during Mugabe's leadership of Zimbabwe. As Rwodzi rightly observed, during Mugabe's reign, "there was no state commitment to bring sanity and finality to the discourses surrounding this ethnicised conflict and admission of guilt remained an impossibility on the part of those with control over the instruments of force and coercion." Not surprisingly, it is one area that has greatly dented Mugabe's legacy. As an entry point to this conundrum, Rwodzi asks centrally the germane question: "whose fault was it anyway?" His response that constitutes the central argument of the chapter is that there is need to transcend the oft-lopsided narratives about the *gukurahundi* that have been proffered, which tend to heap all the blame on Mugabe and ZANU-PF government. In other words, Rwodzi calls for the revision of the historiographies and historicisation of the unpleasant era with a view to bringing balance to the narratives of the *gukurahundi*.

In Chapter 6, Nancy Mazuru ably examines how Robert Mugabe's legacy was dented through his wife, Grace Mugabe's land grabbing spree in the Mazowe District of Zimbabwe's Mashonaland Central Province. Ostensibly, the land grabs by Grace Mugabe, especially into Manzou Farm that was being occupied by resettled farmers from around 2000, was couched as part of her growing philanthropic work. However, as Mazuru ably demonstrates, the heartless manner of the dispossession of the resettled farmers at Manzou Farm directly contradicted the given philanthropic explanation for the evacuations to pave way for the expansion of her orphanage. This was because the farmers at Manzou were displaced during the middle of a rainy season, being dumped by the road side, violently evicted by state apparatus, their shelters and properties wantonly destroyed and they were not also provided with any form of assistance to cushion them against the vagaries of the harsh weather or the cost of relocation. Furthermore, the displacements happened against the backdrop of a High Court order that deemed

the evictions illegal. In the final analysis, as Mazuru argues, the “chapter also analyses how the forced displacements controvert Grace’s expected duties as “mother of the nation”, especially considering the fact that mothers are generally perceived as people who have great concern for the wellbeing of children in particular and families in general.”

The seventh chapter by Fidelis Peter Thomas Duri on *Mugabeism* after the ouster of Mugabe penetrates deeper beyond the historical analysis of Mugabe’s legacy by looking at the continuation of Mugabe traits in the governing of Zimbabwe between November 2017 and July 2018. This was a period following the forced removal of Mugabe and his replacement as leader of ZANU-PF and as President of Zimbabwe by Emmerson Mnangagwa, his former deputy. As Duri says, this was because Robert Mugabe was only the face of a larger institution of *Mugabeism*. Furthermore, as Duri also posits, this also stemmed from the fact that the two key architects of the removal of Mugabe, namely, Emmerson Mnangagwa and Constantino Chiwenga “... had been together with him [Mugabe] during the liberation struggle and were also part and parcel of his 37-year-old rule after independence... part and parcel of Mugabe’s dictatorial rule... for the greater part of the post-independence period.” In this regard, and citing Melber (14 December 2017), Mnangagwa and Chiwenga shared “Mugabe’s legacy of autocracy which included “genocidal massacres (in Matabeleland during the 1980s), rigged presidential elections and systematic clampdown on media, political opponents and civil-society activists.” As a result, *Mugabeism*, which had become “the system, values and culture” associated with Robert Mugabe’s 37-year, could not be ended with the demise of one man, *albeit* the face and ideologue of it.

In Chapter 8, Chenjerai Muwaniki and Martin Musengi disentangle Mugabe’s legacy in the domain of democratising access to educational opportunities by the majority in the post-independence era. Against the generally accepted view that one of Mugabe’s shining legacies was in increasing quantitatively and qualitatively access to education by the previously disadvantaged blacks, the duo question the same successes with regard to vocational

education and training (VET) offered to the hearing-impaired youths. They have established that many of the VET hearing-impaired youth graduates have remained unemployed or underemployed and mostly doing menial unskilled jobs. To them, this was so because the successive “Mugabe government’s policies and practices have been particularly inconsistent for this group as government has prevaricated between treating them as disabled or non-disabled persons.” Furthermore, Muwaniki and Musengi contend that “despite the quantitative expansion, Mugabe’s success in qualitatively democratising education is uncertain because of massive unemployment and underemployment of many hearing-impaired youths.” Due to the above reasons, they argue for a rereading of Mugabe’s legacy in education as conflicted.

Edmore Dube’s luminous Chapter 9, using periodic publications by the Roman Catholic Church’s organs such as the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Social Work (Silveira House), examines the place of the Catholic Church’s publications in safeguarding good governance and democracy during Robert Mugabe’s tenure as the leader of Zimbabwe. Many a times, most of these periodic publications publicised Mugabe’s, and Mugabe’s governments’, roles in scourges of politically-motivated violence, and in the violation of the citizens and political opposition’s peace and justice. In doing so, they have served to help protect the human rights and dignity of Zimbabweans who were placed at the mercy of Mugabe and his government. Among the most powerful, if not brave, of the Catholic Church’s publications, included the one on the infamous *gukurahundi* era in which up to 20 000 citizens perished in the clashes, mostly due to the excesses of the government’s Fifth Brigade battalion. What is also interesting to note is that the Catholic Church’s publications have also heaped praise on some of Mugabe’s successes, including the exponential post-colonial expansion of access to education.

Chapter 10 by Angeline Sithole and Tasara Muguti, in an ethnographic study of Highfields, a township suburb of Harare, evaluates how Robert Gabriel Mugabe’s domestic policies led to the informalisation of the Zimbabwean economy. Although they make

intermittent reference to the 1990s, their focus is on Mugabe's disastrous policies from the turn of the century. They consider the negative effects of the economic mismanagement, the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), the participation of Zimbabwe in the distant war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the adoption of investor unfriendly policies. To them, the policies shrunk the formal economy leading to the upsurge in the informal one as the residents sought to survive a growing socio-economic crisis. To them, "as the Zimbabwean economy continued to shrink, the informal economy became the main alternative employer and accommodated millions of Zimbabweans in providing sources of income and forms of livelihood sustenance." Their chapter ends with an analysis of the challenges and opportunities created to the Zimbabweans as they participated in the informal sector.

Elias Konyana in Chapter 11 dissects through the positive legacy that Robert Mugabe left in the arena of traditional medical practice. As Konyana argues, the use of traditional medicine became regularised and streamlined with the advent of the country's independence under Robert Mugabe. As he says, prior to the attainment of independence, there existed a racially bifurcated medical care system in Zimbabwe. The allopathic sector existed specifically to service the white community and the traditional medicine area, which was highly neglected and uncoordinated, served the needs of the majority blacks. However, with the advent of a Mugabe government in 1980, traditional medical practices were harmonised with the crafting of the Traditional Medical Practitioners Act (Chapter 27:14) of 1981. Added to this the Mugabe government placed traditional medical care at par with the allopathic sector, while also deracialising the health sector, as other sectors of the economy. On the whole, Konyana points out that "the status of African traditional medical practices was comprehensively elevated by the new government of Robert Mugabe when it came to power in 1980... [and that] that traditional medical practices were given space to flourish when Zimbabwe became independent." This was a result of positive "medical policy frameworks that the government

instituted to rationalise traditional medicine and traditional medical practices, thereby making TMP recognisable as being at par, if not better, with modern medical practices and institutions.”

Chapter 12 by Tenson Muyambo critically evaluates Robert Mugabe’s personality from the perspectives of the fast track land reform programme (FTLRP) of the new millennium. In his endeavour to trouble the discourses around the FTLRP, Muyambo feels that there is need to revisit the FTLRP in terms of opening up discussions that go deeper in terms of its timing, challenges and benefits. The invitation here by Muyambo is for the opening up of spaces that go beyond the obvious polemics of the good and bad about the FTLRP. To him, after such analyses, it would then be possible to properly proffer a true narrative on Mugabe’s legacy. In the end, as Muyambo avers, and notwithstanding the challenges associated with its implementation, the FTLRP can also be perceived in positive terms as it “was a welcome development that took place at a convenient time under the circumstances it had to take place.” Importantly, Muyambo notes that the “chapter is not oblivious to the fact that there were grey areas that did not only make it a human rights issue, but a haphazard programme meant to politically garner votes for a party that was under a serious threat from opposition politics [and] ... was also a machination tool to ‘appease’ a restless populace that had been short changed for a long time.”

Nkwazi Mhango’s Chapter 13 carefully traces the personal and political life Robert Mugabe, in a bid to show how he changed from being a hero for Zimbabwe and Africa at large, to become a villain. Mhango shows how both the social and political life of Mugabe kept changing till the time he was ousted in November 2017. As Mhango himself describes:

The personal and political lives of Robert Gabriel Mugabe Matibili, a chauvinistic colossus who intimately and practically bestrode and towered over Zimbabwe’s, Africa’s and World’s politics for over three intermittent decades changing shapes and style from time to time. For over three decades, Mugabe was a fixture in regional and international

geopolitics as well as *realpolitik* globally thanks to his pugnacious and obnoxious style of dealing with others.

As argued by Mhango, Mugabe's controversial character, particularly his obnoxious style of dealing with others as well as his political shrewdness, enabled him to cling on power and remain on top of the game in Zimbabwe and Africa alike for close to four decades. However, Mhango is quick to note that Mugabe's advanced age, mismanagement of the country's economy, corruption and nepotism coupled with his wife, Grace Mugabe's love for power and material things, contributed to his ultimate downfall.

In Chapter 14, Tendai Chibaya and Phanos Matura dwell on the impacts of Zimbabwe's Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) on the growth of the tourism sector in the country. Their central argument is that with the advent of the chaotic and violent FTLRP, the volatile tourism industry was largely negatively affected. In their words:

On the whole, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme contributed to a significant decline in international tourist arrivals in Zimbabwe as the country was regarded as an unsafe destination across the globe. The country experienced an 11% drop in tourist arrivals and a 38% decline in revenue received during the period 1999-2000 (*Ibid*). The year 2002 recorded an 8% decline of tourist arrivals while revenue receipted an 8% drop as compared to 2001 (*Ibid*). In 2004, a decline of 18% on tourist arrivals was recorded (ZTA Report, 2004), 16% decrease in tourist arrivals in 2005 accompanied with 49% drop in revenue in the same period (ZTA Report, 2005). The year 2008 recorded a 22% decline in tourist arrivals (ZTA Report, 2008).

This assessment was critical because the tourism sector was the third largest contributor to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). As a result, the downturn in the tourism sector negatively impacted the larger economy of the whole country as revenue inflows plummeted while many workers within the sector lost their jobs, which contributed to the growth of unemployment and poverty in the country.

The fifteenth chapter by Raymond Tapiwa Mubaya delves deep into convolutions between politics and heritage in Zimbabwe's matrices of power. Mubaya considers how former President Robert Mugabe abused heritage, particularly land, as a political bait to win him and his ZANU-PF party against political opponents. Broadly, his chapter wades into one of the most contentious and polarising discussions around Mugabe's legacy. While admitting that many people, especially ZANU-PF supporters accessed land via the Mugabe-led fast track land reform programme, Mubaya presents, as his larger argument that the land redistribution project presented Mugabe and his cronies in ZANU-PF and government the opportunity for the primitive accumulation of land. As he says: "... besides benefiting his top political cronies as well as ZANU-PF supporters and war veterans, the land reform programme was a self-enriching and self-aggrandising project especially when considering the number of farms acquired by Mugabe himself and his top ruling party officials." Another tangent that Mubaya's chapter touches on is how the conceptualisation of heritage shifts due to shifting political discourses. In his own words, Mubaya says that: "inasmuch as heritage is an important resource in the construction of collective identity and nation building, it is more often than not, used and abused to pursue and fulfil certain political agendas."

In chapter 16, Genius Tevera and Golden Maunganidze, using a combination of historical analysis, hermeneutics and a theatrical play titled 'Operation Restore Regasi' that was staged countrywide between December 2017 and July 2018, meticulously examine the shifting personalities of Robert Mugabe. To them, Mugabe "transitioned from being a 'people's person' to being a senile captive dictator under the influence of a young, over-ambitious wife." What is also captivating about their chapter is that they managed to capture the many "identities" if not discursive narratives about Robert Mugabe in the media and academic circles across his 37-year long reign over Zimbabwe. As they rightly noted, in the state controlled media and in ZANU-PF aligned academic circles, Mugabe was presented in saintly statuses and eulogising language as a God-given leader who had to rule till the grave. On the other end of the

spectrum, were those that likened Mugabe to a monstrous dictator who had destroyed Africa's jewel. By roping in the theatrical arts into an analysis of Mugabe's legacy, Tevera and Maunganidze have tapped into the oft underestimated genre of political analysis in Zimbabwe. To this end, while there has been a growing list of political theatres, satires and dramas, in post-independent Zimbabwe, their academic use has been limited. As such Tevera and Maunganidze's chapter offers a refreshing change.

Chapter 17 by Munyaradzi Mawere and Costain Tandi interrogates the political and economic experiences of the Republic of Zimbabwe during the reign of Robert Mugabe, from April 1980 to November 2017. For Mawere and Tandi, one of the main sociological problems in Zimbabwe during the reign of Mugabe was poor governance. On this note, the duo argue that "each of the factors that restricted the country from developing was a direct consequence of poor public policies and corruption", factor which subjected many Zimbabweans to gross violations of property rights, including state-sponsored land expropriation and vandalism, inequality, abject poverty, restrictive business regulations, and an abysmal monetary policy. Mawere and Tandi, thus, conclude that a plethora of factors robbed Zimbabweans' capacity to develop themselves economically, resulting in abject poverty as well as political and economic decline during the reign of Robert Mugabe.

Chapter 18 by Fidelis Duri and Eusabiah Chikonyora focuses on the mode of conduct by First Ladies in Africa, particularly on how this has contributed to the downfall of their husbands. The chapter argues that such First Ladies' mode of conduct – what Duri and Chikonyora refers to as 'femocratic' antics – is "in actual fact veritable manifestations of patriarchal dominance in politics in many parts of the world where women exploit their husbands' political positions to gain access to state power which they manipulate for purposes of personal aggrandisement". As Duri and Chikonyora further argue, the machinations of First Ladies such as Marie Antoinette, Mary Todd Lincoln, Imelda Marcos, Safia Gaddafi and Elena Ceausescu, among many others, are exemplary cases, which notably contributed to the downfall of the referred's husbands.

Munoda Mararike and Mtapuri's insightful and thought provoking Chapter 19 invites the reader to reconsider *Mugabeism* in some positive light. Generally, as expressed in Fidelis Duri's chapter in this volume, *Mugabeism* has largely been expressed in negative terms that allude to it as close to dictatorship and authoritarianism. However, to Mararike and Mtapuri's insightful chapter, *Mugabeism* should rather be considered as a 'decoloniality' concept, that was established to fight against continued Western hegemony through inviting blacks to own land, a critical means to wealth generation. To them land redistribution went beyond giving blacks land, but it meant restoring them to their ancestral lands and was a key method for restitution. As they put it: "*Mugabeism* emerges forces an impetus that beckons to fight a coloniality mentality or mind-set in all formerly colonised territories – and these forces must be dismembered from the body of imperialism through consciousness and land reforms and repossession." Their chapter also further explores the sources of the negative labels associated with *Mugabeism*, in the western liberal propaganda machinery that was against the complete liberation of Zimbabwe. This chapter is sure to generate a lot much needed debate on *Mugabeism*, and on the figure of Robert Mugabe.

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‘Stop It!’ Vitriol, Scorn and the ‘November Revolution’: Grace Mugabe’s Hate language and the ‘End’ of Robert Mugabe’s Reign

Ngonidzashe Marongwe

Introduction: The ‘November Revolution’ and the Mugabe’s ‘fall from Grace’

This chapter interrogates the significance of Grace Mugabe, former President Robert Mugabe’s wife’s hate language during Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) rallies, to the fall of her husband who was forced resign on 21st of November 2017 (Gagare, 2017). In offering his resignation as head of state and government and Commander in Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces on Tuesday 21 November 2017, President Mugabe indicated that:

Following my verbal communication with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Advocate Jacob Mudenda at 13:53 hours, 21st November 2017 intimating my intention to resign as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, I, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, in terms of Section 96, Sub-section 1 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, hereby formally tender my resignation as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe with immediate effect (Gagare, 2017: np).

Largely, this offer to resign was directly a result of events of the short month (of two weeks) from Monday the 6th to the 21st of November 2017. This dense month began with the firing of Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa from his position by President Robert Mugabe on the 6th of November, followed by the 13th November 2017 pronouncement by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Commander that the military would step in to restore order in the

ZANU-PF party and government, the deployment of army tanks at strategic places in Harare and across the major highways across the country from the evening of 14 November 2017, the 15th November 2017 announcement on Zimbabwean Television by the army of the launch of 'Operation Restore Legacy', the 18 November 2017 recall of President Mugabe from the position of First Secretary of ZANU-PF and the dismissal of his wife and a few of their cohorts in the so-called G40 cabal from ZANU-PF and the issuance of an order by ZANU-PF's Central Committee that Mugabe resign as President of Zimbabwe by mid-day 20 November 2017, the 18 November 2017 mass demonstrations in Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru calling for Mugabe to resign; and the 21 November 2017 impeachment motion tabled for discussion by the joint seating of the Lower and Upper Houses of the Zimbabwean Parliament (Gagare, 2017; Ndebele, 2017). Generally, these events have become known as the 'November Revolution' in Zimbabwe.

The news of Mugabe's fall from grace subsequently divided opinion both within and outside Zimbabwe, as his long reign of 37 years and 7 months had. Whilst many celebrated openly in the streets and as messages of congratulatory messages poured in for the 'dawn of a new Zimbabwe,' others urged cautious optimism and yet some others were openly disturbed by the controversial transition. Issues that raised the divergence of views included questions on the constitutionality of Mugabe's downfall in a campaign that was underwritten by the army (Mubako, 2017; Magaisa, 9 December 2017), the future composition of the government and the future policies by the new government. While all this was important for the discourses that emerged and dominated, the question that is germane and central for this chapter is: what precipitated the end game for President Mugabe? The contention of this chapter is that more than anything, the downfall of President Mugabe was engineered by the campaign of hate speeches (and hate actions) orchestrated by his wife Grace, leading, literally, to his fall from grace.

The making of the November Revolution can be traced back to two well-coordinated and financed pogroms of hate by Grace Mugabe. These occurred in October 2014 and the October 2017,

targeting former Vice Presidents Joyce Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa, respectively. The former campaign was directly linked to Grace Mugabe's rise to becoming the ZANU-PF Women's League Chairperson, while the latter was meant to ensure her rise to the ZANU-PF and national presidium as one of the two Vice Presidents after ensuring the fall of Mnangagwa (Magaisa, 6 November 2017b). The two campaigns succeeded in removing the two Vice Presidents from office. For Joyce Mujuru, this was permanent as she was dismissed from ZANU-PF and government and she subsequently formed her own faltering political movements, first, Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) and later Zimbabwe People's Party (ZPP). However, for Mnangagwa the dismissal was rather short-lived as he bounced back as the country's President within a short period of two weeks. To this extent, Mnangagwa was inaugurated as Mugabe's successor and the country's second executive President on the 24th of November 2017.

In ordering the two aforementioned former Vice Presidents to 'Stop It', Grace castigated them, using undiplomatic and uncouth language that threw decorum and etiquette out of the window, for among others, corruption, wanting to take over the presidency, creating parallel party and government structures, witchcraft, prostitution and disloyalty. The two pogroms, in Magaisa's (7 October 2017a: np) words, borrowing nomenclature used following the massacres of the Jews in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, literally, made the months of October 2014 and 2017, "month(s) of long knives" in ZANU-PF and in government as Grace launched contemptuous, acerbic, disrespectful, dismissive, unrestrained, stinging "wild and vicious" attacks on the former Vice-Presidents (Ibid: np).

Broadly, the argument in this chapter, as put forward by Simbi Mubako (2017: np), is that "Grace brought down Mugabe from State House as surely as Eve brought down Adam in the Garden of Eden." This was because as Magaisa (30 December 2017) says "Grace's mouth knew no boundaries and once she took charge of the microphone, everyone was fair game. Even serving generals in the military were not spared" and that she "was loud, angry, arrogant and

rude to other people.” In this regard, the Grace Mugabe-led pogrom generated a lot of anxiety, uncertainty, divisions and dissonance within ZANU-PF as she worked through and widened the gap between the different factions in ZANU-PF. Added to this, Grace Mugabe created a lot of enemies for herself and her husband, fomented violence against the targets. As well, she alienated President Mugabe from his trusted lieutenants such as former Vice President Mnangagwa and former army chief General Constantino Chiwenga, widely thought to have engineered President Robert Mugabe’s re-election in 2008, and the larger military body. She also estranged Mugabe from the country’s Second Chimurenga veterans, the foot soldiers of the so-called Third Chimurenga of the early years of the new millennium that was characterised by violent and uncompensated farm take-overs of white-owned farms. More importantly, the undiplomatic and denigrating speeches by the then Zimbabwe’s president were directly linked to the fall of President Robert Mugabe from power as they led to the direct intervention of the army in ZANU-PF succession, which culminated in the army deploying on 14 November 2017, ostensibly to ‘fish out’ criminals that had surrounded the then President (Mugabe) and were causing untold suffering to the masses of Zimbabwe (*Times Live*, 15 November 2017).

At another level, and drawing insights from across Africa, including the colonial discourses that disparaged Africans, the Rwandan genocide and the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, this chapter considers how hate language and propaganda can be serious catalysts for socio-political disharmony, hate and even human massacres by defining what is good or bad, what is worth living or not. For Grace Mugabe, this resulted in her creation of a storm that eventually consumed her and her husband as she created a lot of enemies and opposition to her, as well as alienating President Mugabe from his powerbase in the military, war veterans and in his half-century protégée, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who eventually succeeded him.

Among many, Grace Mugabe became a polarising figure, who was as much loathed as she was liked. On the one hand, Grace

Mugabe was castigated by her critics and opponents as ‘Dr. DisGrace,’ for she had acquired a contentious doctorate from the University of Zimbabwe (Mubako, 2017), as an uncultured First Lady who did not know her place in the party and state businesses and for her penchant for expensive shopping and obscene display of opulence in a sea of national poverty, which also earned her the moniker “Gucci Grace” (Kelly, 2017). In the later regard, she had allegedly bought multi-million dollar houses across the world, owned a multimillion diamond wedding anniversary ring and her children had a detestable penchant for expensive cars such as Rolls Royces and expensive whiskeys (Magaisa, 30 December 2017c). On the other hand, she was celebrated for her forthrightness as *Mafirakureva*, the Shona word for one who articulates issues without fear or favour as she did not have sacred cows. To her role as *Mafirakureva*, Grace’s husband, Robert Mugabe, once declared that “*Mai* (Mrs) Mugabe speaks the truth from her heart” (*The Citizen*, 4 November 2017). It was in this role as *Mafirakureva* that she ruffled many feathers, including the Vice Presidents’ who were eventually dismissed by her husband and some of the military’s top brass. Notwithstanding the above, it also stands to reason that the downfall of Robert Mugabe cannot be solely attributed to the Grace Mugabe hate campaign factor, as there were a lot of dynamics that conspired and coalesced to bring him down. Among others, was a long standing economic crisis, lack of foreign support, targeted sanctions, the military factor through ‘Operation Restore Legacy’ and a general and growing dislike of Mugabe by many Zimbabweans.

In the beginning was the word: Hate language and incitement to violence

This section considers the link between hate language campaign and violence, basically the link between words spoken and actions that are taken. Broadly, the link explored here derives from the Christian Bible teaching that “in the beginning was the word” (John 1verse 1), which led to the creation of the world and everything in it by God. This section begins by defining hate language. According to

Davidson, Warmlesley, Macy and Weber (2017: np), hate language is “language that is used to express hatred towards a targeted group or is intended to be derogatory, to humiliate, or to insult the members of a group.” To this definition, Stein and Richter (2013: 25) add that hate language is “terms that dehumanise, demonise, stigmatise, or delegitimise, national, ethnic, religious, racial, or political groups.” In this sense, to dehumanise entails taking groups or individuals as sub-human, inhuman or without human qualities, including taking the groups as some kind of irritable diseases as cancer, as infectious agents, as animals or as foreign species (*Ibid*). In terms of delegitimation, this involves using terms that deny the rights of the groups to exist by prescribing them any rights to being political groups, racial groups, ethnic groups, or as religious groups (*Ibid*).

Following the definitions, it is prudent to establish the relationship between hate language and violent actions. In this regard, and by extension, what is the link between hate language that Grace Mugabe deployed and the purging that followed in ZANU-PF and government? The response to this question is undergirded by the discussion by Stein and Richter (2013) that points to hate language as a precursor to violence. To Stein and Richter (2013), hate language as witnessed in the Nuremburg and Rwandan trials, was a key ingredient in the incitement to violence, and as a result the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court have considered using hate language and incitement as constitutive of crimes against humanity. Furthermore, they contend that violence deploys hate language as the central ingredient in mobilisation. In this sense, hate language becomes the “software” of the “hard wars” that are fought in the “airwaves, media and cyber space” (*Ibid*: 11). In their contention, the above happens because through demonisation, a group loses its humanity in the attackers’ eyes, which exposes the group to attacks (*Ibid*), while dehumanisation creates sub-beings or “inhumans” that can be done away with (*Ibid*: 25). In the end, as Allport cited in Stein and Richter (2013: 27) avers, “there is never a bite without previous barking.” Regarding the events in ZANU-PF and government in the months of October 2014 and October 2017

respectively, the contention here is that besides creating “political nuisance(s)” (Magaisa, 7 October 2017a: np) in Mujuru and Mnangagwa and their respective followers, Grace’s tirades led to deep-rooted purging that destabilised, differentially, ZANU-PF and the state.

What should not escape attention is that Zimbabwe is fraught with examples where hate language deployed against certain individuals was followed upon by violence against these individuals. To start off with, in the early 1980s, before the formation of the first government of national unity between the Zimbabwe African National Union and Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Zimbabwe African People’s Union (PF ZAPU), the then leader of PF ZAPU, Joshua Nkomo was regarded by the then leader of ZANU-PF and the country’s Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, as a cobra in the house whose head had to be crushed. In the immediate aftermath of this pronouncement, Joshua Nkomo and his followers were harshly hunted down leading to numerous deaths under the infamous era of massacres in Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces called the *gukurahundi* in which up to 20 000 people, mostly civilians were killed by the government forces (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)/Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), 1999). In addition to the Nkomo case, in the early years of the new millennium, Morgan Tsvangirai and his Movement for Democratic structures and supporters were often caricatured as sell-outs and creations of the imperial West, which resulted in their almost continuous browbeating and dehumanization by the former ZANU-PF leader and country’s President, Robert Mugabe (Marongwe, 2013). Following the discussion of the two examples from post-colonial Zimbabwe and taking a cue from Allport’s contention also discussed above, the next section discusses the nexus between Grace Mugabe’s hate language campaign and the subsequent violent actions, including purges that befell the targeted individuals.

The speeches of humiliation: Public discipline or pre-emptive bluffs?

By November 2017, the month of the fall of Robert Mugabe from the Zimbabwean throne, Grace, had no doubt become a key king-maker not only in ZANU-PF but also in Zimbabwe. It was this tremendously influential, but fetishised, position and irrational temper coupled with unbridled political ambitions that she, as already outlined earlier, had become boisterous, crude, undiplomatic and acidic in her language that she had, arguably created more enemies than friends within the ruling ZANU-PF party, in government, the military, among the generality of Zimbabweans and beyond Zimbabwe's borders. Senior and junior military, government and ZANU-PF party figures, alike, were brazenly publicly chastised and castigated. Among those who were publicly attacked and/ or ridiculed besides the two former Vice Presidents Joyce Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa included the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Publicity and President Mugabe's Press Secretary and Spokesperson, George Charamba, senior ZANU-PF officials including the then Mashonaland East Provincial Chairman, Ray Kaukonde, then the Mashonaland Central Province senior ruling party official, Kazembe Kazembe, and the then Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association leader, Chris Mutsvangwa (*Nehanda Radio*, 23 December 2017).

At times, some of these eminent figures would be made to stand and were attacked or were shamed from their seats or in their absence on national media such as the ZTV and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) radio stations that made the attacks to reach maximum audiences. These scenes recalled the public disciplinary modes that Mitchel Foucault articulates, for example, in the public disciplining of Damiens. As Foucault (1998) argues, the public disciplining of Damiens was also targeted at the audiences that witnessed the act. To the Grace Mugabe episodes of hate-filled speeches, Alex Magaisa opined that they epitomised the fact that Grace "was brash and condescending, with a penchant for humiliating adults in public" (quoted in Ndebele, 2017: np).

Internationally, she was notorious for her undiplomatic rows with journalists, including the infamous attack on a journalist, Richard Jones, in Hong Kong in 2009 and the August 2017 attack of a South African model, Gabriella Engels, who was allegedly dating one of her sons (Kelly, 2017). Literally, as *Mafirakureva*, she could say anything, act on it and ride rough shod against anyone without due care. The next section is divided into three, first, the vitriol against Mujuru, second, the diabolic attacks against Mnangagwa, and lastly, the sporadic verbal missiles against some of the military's top brass.

Joyce Mujuru: The demon that needed 'baby dumping' and exorcism

The first person who was targeted by Grace Mugabe's hate speeches was the then Vice President, Joyce Mujuru from October 2014 in a countrywide series of rallies dubbed 'Meet the people tours'. Among the outstanding statements directed against Joyce Mujuru by Grace included that the President (Robert Mugabe) "baby dump" her for expansive corruption, extortion which had seen her (Mujuru) owning up to 10 per cent stakes in major companies and owning a diamond mine, endangering the First Family's business interests, for killing her husband (retired General Solomon Mujuru) in an inferno, and for directing youths from several provinces not to attend Grace's rallies (Gagare, 2014; Machivenyika, and Share, 24 October 2014). At Chipadze Stadium in Bindura, for example, she said: "If you can hear this, you faction leader (Mujuru), approach Mugabe and ask for forgiveness... If the President does not dump you, we are personally going to dump you" (Gagare, 2014: np). And further, she ranted that:

The moment of truth for factionalism will soon come... (Mugabe) is fed up with this issue. Time will soon come when we will name and shame the person we are referring to as 'Gamatox'. I am told the demon of factionalism started in this province, but the moment of truth shall come and you (Mujuru's supporters) will be in trouble. The youths have alerted me about someone who is spearheading

factionalism in this province and I told Mugabe to ‘baby-dump’ that person and I told him that if he does not, we will! (Ibid).

She also openly boasted of her king-making role in ZANU-PF, and by extension, Zimbabwe, by stating that: “*Ndini ndakaita kuti Mai Mujuru vave paposition yavari. Hapana asiri kusviziwa izvozvo* (I made Mrs Mujuru the Vice President. Everybody knows it). She then became Vice President and I was genuinely happy that one of us, women, had been elevated to such a position.”

She added:

Ndiri kundzwa zvangu mumwe wangu (VP Mujuru) kuti kudzingwa basa hakuna kunaka. Dai Mai Mujuru varesigner zvavo. Zvakanaka inini kana ndichiti pinda uite Vice President, kana ndoti chibuda zvaipa. Chibuda zvakakwana / I am telling my colleague (Mujuru) that it is not nice to be dismissed from work. She should resign. It is ok for me to make you Vice President, but when I tell you to quit, it is bad. Resign, you have heard enough opportunity (Machivenyika and Share, 24 October 2014).

Emmerson Mnangagwa: The snake whose head had to be crushed

In 2017, some three years after his appointment as the Vice President of ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa was subjected, like her predecessor Joyce Mujuru, to a lot of vitriol and scorn by the then First Lady, Grace Mugabe. He was attacked on basically the same charge sheet as Mujuru for allegedly engineering factionalism, setting up of parallel party and government structures, corruption, undermining the authority of President Mugabe, and trying to bring the First Family’s businesses down. In her words while addressing Apostolic Faith congregants at Rufaro Stadium on the 5th of November 2017, Grace attacked Mnangagwa saying:

I moved to stop the issue of youths being expelled from the party and demanded that we deal with the head of factionalism. A snake is better dealt with by crushing the head. His head must be crushed. I have said I will personally make sure

disciplinary procedures are followed to deal with Mnangagwa even if everyone in the party is scared. I will not be intimidated” (My emphasis) (Gagare, 2017).

In the same attack, Grace further ranted: “*Ndamuudza kuti inewe Mnangagwa ka unofunga kuti unoziva president hauvazive, you don’t know that man. Mnangagwa wajaira, wajaira tinokudonhedza mangwana chaiye!*” which translates to “I told Mnangagwa that you do not know the President. You have taken us for granted for too long, we will drop you from your position as early as tomorrow!” (*Newsday*, 22 November 2017).

She further denigrated Mnangagwa by rhetorically asking “*Mnangawa chii, what is Mnangagwa on this earth, munhu akatopiravavo basa nemurume wangu?*” This translated to mean: “What is Mnangagwa on this earth? A simple person who was handpicked to his position by my husband?” (*Ibid*). In yet another highly undiplomatic speech directed at Mnangagwa, Grace once opined that “I might have a small fist. But when it comes to fighting, I will put stones inside to enlarge it. Do not doubt my capabilities” (*Ibid*). This tone used against Mnangagwa in 2017, differed markedly from that she used in 2014 when she praised Mnangagwa for his loyalty and humbleness saying:

Mnangagwa is someone whom we should respect... He was voted by eight provinces ... (to be) Vice President, but because of the quota system, the President said Mnangagwa you should stand aside for *Mai* (Mrs) Mujuru to be Vice President. He did that because he respects the President. If he was someone else, he would have refused saying: ‘I was voted by the people’ but he did an honourable thing and stepped aside (Machivenyika and Share, 2014).

Army and company: Come and fire at us

Intermittently, as earlier highlighted, other senior ZANU-PF, army and government of Zimbabwe officials were also attacked by the former First Lady, including George Charamba, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services and President Mugabe’s Press Secretary and Spokesperson; ZANU-PF officials including Ray Kaukonde and Kazembe Kazembe and War Veterans leader Chris Mutsvangwa. To these, she

said, at differing moments: “*Fanika aka kamurume kanonzi Kaukonde ndakakamaka fani, kapedza vakadzi vevanhu kachingosekerera ende mazino akanaka* (Regarding this small man, Kaukonde, I hate him so much. He has accosted so many married women because of his good looks and smile)” (*Nehanda Radio*, 23 December 2017). She once also said to Kazembe Kazembe that: “Kazembe Kazembe *huya pano mhanya, wanga wawe kutoziona wawe chairman ka* (Kazembe Kazembe, rush here (to the podium), you were already envisaging yourself as the Chairman of this province?” (*Ibid*). On George Charamba and the military top brass she said, “*Iwe Joji, Joji, hauna right yekumisidzana naMinister*, you are too junior (Hey George, George, you have no right to be publicly fighting ministers, you are too junior)” (*Ibid*).

To the military’s top brass, she pointed out that: “Every day *tinogara tichityityidzirwa naMutsvangwa kunzi Mnangagwa ane support yemasoja, ngavanye vatipfure* (Every day we are told to live in fear of Mnangagwa because he has the support of the army, let them come and shoot us)” (*Ibid*). She further alleged, publicly, that the army wanted to kill her son, Chatunga, and to bomb (destroy) her Alpha Omega Dairies in Mazoe (Ndebele, 2017). On Chris Mutsvangwa, she once said, “Mutsvangwa deserved to go. He deserved to leave this party. *Nekuti iny’any’a* (he is troublesome). *Haana kukwana* (He is not normal). *Pasi naye* (down with him)” (*Newsday*, 22 November 2017).

Violence, Purges and the November Revolution

Following from the above section on the slew of Grace Mugabe’s hate speeches, this section discusses the impact of the Grace Mugabe-led pogrom of verbal attacks on the former Vice Presidents and other senior ZANU-PF and government officials. The larger argument for the section is that the verbal attacks spoke to insidious violence that resulted in serious purging within ZANU-PF and government leading to the creation of splinter movements from the main ZANU-PF party. These led to serious purges in both the ZANU-PF party and in government. Besides creating breakaway formations, the purges also contributed to the disruption of

government programmes. According to Simutanyi (2009:6), cited in Marongwe and Makaye (2016: 172-173):

A breakaway group or party can be defined as one where, due to irreconcilable differences between the party's leaders and some of its officials or members, the latter decide to resign and form another group or party. In many instances those perceived to be a threat to party leadership are purged, forcing them to form parties of their own to settle old scores. However, the circumstances that lead to breakaway groups can often be found in the nature of the African parties themselves, in particular the entrenched authoritarian and undemocratic tendencies of most parties in the region.

Following Simutanyi's persuasive analysis, one is forced to perceive the splintering of ZANU-PF along the Gamatox and Weevils factions, following the attacks on Mujuru and her supporters, as part of the formation of breakaway parties as these led to the formation of splinter movements from the main ZANU-PF wing. The Gamatox faction that was led by Mujuru was stampeded out of ZANU-PF towards the ZANU-PF Conference in December 2014 with senior ZANU-PF officials and people such as the then Vice President (Mujuru), the then ZANU-PF Secretary for Administration, Didymus Mutasa, Rugare Gumbo, Dzikamai Mavahaire, Claudius Makova, Bright Matonga, Sylvester Nguni and Ambrose Mutinhiri forced out of ZANU-PF (*The Standard*, 19 April 2016). At first, Joyce Mujuru, Rugare Gumbo and Didymus Mutasa formed the Zimbabwe People First political party under the leadership of Mujuru (Ibid). However, the marriage of the three did not last for too long as in 2017, Joyce Mujuru was stampeded out of ZPF and she formed the National People's Party (NPP) (*The Herald*, 4 March 2017).

In like manner, Mnangagwa and the so-called Lacoste faction members were hounded out of ZANU-PF by the so-called G40 faction that was allegedly led by Grace Mugabe who harboured intentions of becoming the country's Vice President. In the lead up to the 5th November 2017 dismissal of Mnangagwa from both

ZANU-PF and government, several of his key associates had been harassed out of ZANU-PF and consequently the state. In terms of the attacks, there were spirited calls by some members of the G40 for, in the words of Mandiitawepi Chimene, the then Manicaland Minister for Provincial Affairs, for President Mugabe to “descend to provinces and cleanse them of Lacoste members” (*The Herald*, 8 November 2017). Among those targeted were Chris Mutsvangwa, the war veterans’ leader and Minister responsible for the Welfare of the War Veterans; almost all ZANU-PF Provincial Chairpersons; Kazembe Kazembe and George Charamba (*Nehanda Radio*, 23 December 2017). Some of Mnangagwa’s allies in government had also been demoted, including Patrick Chinamasa who, in the former President Mugabe’s last cabinet reshuffle of 2017, was removed from the powerful Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to become Minister of the lowly Ministry of Cyber Crimes (*Newsday*, 10 October 2017).

What should not escape attention is that the seemingly internal ZANU-PF purges had larger national and governmental implications as some of the targeted officials occupied high-ranking positions in the state. The connection between being persecuted out of ZANU-PF and the state was that there was a strong conflation of the state and ZANU-PF so much that the ZANU-PF officials were also serving as state officials. For instance, Joyce Mujuru was the country’s Vice President, while Didymus Mutasa was the Minister of State Security and yet many others like Dzikamai Mavhaire, Flora Buka and Sylvester Nguni were Ministers of various portfolios. In addition, the cleansing also targeted members of the security forces, which led to national in/security concerns. As such, these purges also led in part to the disruption of normal government operations and affected the implementation of government programmes. What was perhaps worse was that the splintering and its negative ramifications occurred at a critical time in the history of the country when economic hardships were worsening following a relatively prosperous era in the new millennium under the Government of National Unity consummated by ZANU-PF and two MDC formations that existed between 2009 and 2013. On the whole, it can be argued that these

shenanigans in ZANU-PF diverted critical resources, time and personnel from the core mandate as the ruling party in government to deliver on its electoral mandate of serving the people of Zimbabwe.

Besides the above, this caused a lot of anxiety, suspicion, dissonance, disharmony, and to some extent, paralysis in ZANU-PF and government. As one ZANU-PF official from Mashonaland Central Province, quoted in Gagare (2014: np) insinuated, Grace Mugabe's purges on the Gamatox faction and Joyce Mujuru, for example, were:

...something we have never seen before and a declaration of war. We have never heard her or the President even attacking (MDC-T leader Morgan) Tsvangirai like that. She has gone too far.... She also made it clear that she was targeting Mujuru and said she would take matters into her own hands if the President does not 'baby-dump' her. We are wondering where she is getting that power from. Is she saying she is now in charge of the party and country and can now do as she pleases?

The argument by the respondent quoted above raised questions about the usurpation of constitutional duties of the state and party President by his wife, which smacked of some illegal state and party capture. Regarding the Mnangagwa purging, the article in *The Chronicle* (7 November 2017: np), titled, "ZANU-PF provinces gun for Mnangagwa 'loyalists'" illustrates graphically the extent of the purging by identifying very long lists from all the 12 provinces of the country who were deemed to be supporters of Mnangagwa who needed to be removed from ZANU-PF. This sent shockwaves across the country as it potentially sowed seeds of suspicion, gossiping and outright lies meant to jostle for positions which would have been vacated by those persecuted out of the party. What was perhaps more damaging was that the purging and restructuring following the purges went down to the lowest levels of the party, which pitted neighbours against each other. In the end, besides the obvious divisions into the widened and rather conspicuous factions, the goal of managing the

state and government by ZANU-PF was lost. In this regard, this, arguably, contributed to the neglect of the core functions of managing the economy, which, literally, went on a free fall that compounded existential challenges for Zimbabweans as cash shortages, poverty, unemployment and uncertainty became common place. After addressing how Grace Mugabe's hate speech pogroms contributed to the fall of Mugabe, the chapter turns to a discussion of the other factors that contributed, albeit to a smaller extent, to the downfall of Robert Mugabe.

Operation Restore Legacy

Closely related to, and probably a direct effect of the Grace Mugabe campaign of hate, and a critical factor in the stepping down of Mugabe, was the military plan code-named "Operation Restore Legacy" that was launched on 15 November 2018, a few days after the expunging of Emmerson Mnangagwa from the Vice Presidency and from ZANU-PF. For all intents and purposes, the operation, literally, broke Robert Mugabe's long reign and it also literally silenced Grace's motor mouth. Simultaneously, it helped to catapult Emmerson Mnangagwa to the presidency of both ZANU-PF and the state because immediately following the launch of this military operation, the ZANU-PF's Central Committee disowned Robert Mugabe as the party leader, and declared Mnangagwa as the party's new leader and dismissed Grace Mugabe and her staunch supporters, if not ideologues in the so-called G40 faction, including Professor Jonathan Moyo, Patrick Zhuwao and Saviour Kasukuwere (*The Chronicle*, 20 November 2017). Mnangagwa also returned home from exile in South Africa where he had sought refuge following alleged threats on his life following his ouster as Vice President to a hero's welcome and was sworn in as the country's second executive President (*News24*, 22 November 2017).

In the immediate moment of the dismissal of Mnangagwa by the President Mugabe, the then army boss, General Constantino Guvheya Chiwenga, in a press statement at the army headquarters at Josiah Magama Tongogara Barracks, ominously warned that the

military would not fold its arms when senior ZANU-PF figures with liberation war credentials were being expelled from the party and government. To him, this undermined the ethos of the country's war of liberation, the Second Chimurenga (Chidza, 2017a). A day later, on the 14th of November 2017, army tanks were moved into Harare City Centre from Inkomo Barracks and soldiers were deployed at key strategic places in the capital, including the country's major news agency, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), Munhumutapa Building, former President Mugabe's private home known as the Blue Roof, and parliament building (*Herald Live*, 2017), without the approval of President Mugabe who was the then Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces who then was supposed to order that deployment. In launching the operation, the pretext given was that the military was "only targeting criminals around [Mugabe] who [were] committing crimes that [were] causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice..." and to "pacify a degenerating political, social and economic situation in our country which if not addressed may result in violent conflict" (*Daily News*, 15 November, 2017: np).

Critically, the deployment usurped most of Mugabe's constitutional duties and literally placed him under house arrest and limited him to less glamorous duties such as supervising graduation ceremonies at state universities, for example the one held at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) (Mpofu, 2017). Eventually, "Operation Restore Legacy" precipitated the fall of Mugabe as it pressured him, together with the Saturday 18 November massive anti-Mugabe demonstrations in Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru (*The Guardian*, 18 November 2017), into resigning. While the demonstrations were in the country's three largest cities and potentially did not represent the wishes of all Zimbabweans, they indeed showcased the limited support that Mugabe retained in urban areas. To this end, ZANU-PF, under Mugabe, had struggled to make inroads urban constituencies since 2000 and had consistently voted for the MDC formations (Marongwe and Makaye, 2016). They were also used by the media to conspicuously showcase to the international community that the military action only undergirded the

aspirations of Zimbabweans. The marches then also vitiated *coup de tat* claims that were insinuated in other quarters by presenting the military operation as one that was engineered in support of peoples' wishes. What also needs to be noted is that the demonstrations were enabled by the military which, if it did not suit them, would have easily stampeded the space for the holding of the demonstrations.

Another point is that the military operation made reference to the purging in ZANU-PF by pointing out that these could potentially lead to the destabilisation of the security situation and negatively influence the socio-economic set-up in the country. In line with the above, the official statement that was read by General Chiwenga also made reference to the need for the muzzling of hate speeches in ZANU-PF. He also castigated ZANU-PF officials who despised military establishments, in an apparent salvo meant, especially for Grace Mugabe [and others like Professor Jonathan Moyo] (Open Parly, 2017). Grace Mugabe, as already discussed, had at times claimed that the army targeted her children and business empire. Professor Moyo had constantly and viciously used his Twitter handle to attack some ZANU-PF officials and some senior military figures (Ibid). In his words, General Chiwenga said:

ZANU-PF's standing political virtues are a product of faithful adherence to the founding values, decorum, discipline and revolutionary protocol in the ruling party. Party orders were strictly adhered to and whatever differences existed, they were resolved amicably and in the ruling party's closet. Unfortunately, since the turn of 2015, ZANU-PF's traditional protocol and procedures have changed with a lot of gossiping, backbiting and public chastisement being the order of the day. Indeed the Party is undoing its legacy built over the years (Open parly, 2017).

Dislike of the Mugabes

Any discussion on the fall of Mugabe cannot ignore the general dislike of the then First Family by different sections of the Zimbabwean population and some international community members for various reasons. To begin with, during his long reign,

Mugabe created some noticeable enemies for himself and his family. The people of Matabeleland and Midlands provinces still licked the unhealed wounds of the state-led property destructions, injuries and killings of about 20 000 civilians under the infamous *gukurahundi* of between 1982 and 1987 (CCJP/LRF, 1999). As such, most families of those killed, maimed or harassed during the disturbances of *gukurahundi* had long been calling for his ouster and hence supported and celebrated his demise. In addition to the above, current and former ZANU-PF supporters of prospective Mugabe successors, such as the Joyce Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa camps, had reason to hate Mugabe for preventing their preferred candidates' ascension. As discussed in earlier sections, besides the purges of the two former Vice Presidents and their supporters, these actions generally weakened Mugabe's legacy, fragmented ZANU-PF and added acrimony in the state and increased the number of his enemies.

Furthermore, those in the opposition kept harping on the fact that Mugabe had stolen their electoral victories. This was particularly true for the MDC/MDC-T which had largely enjoyed urban and Matabeleland provinces support although it drew support from across the country. To this extent, the MDC-T in particular felt strongly robbed by Mugabe of the top seat in 2008 in the first round of the presidential ballot during the harmonised elections in which Morgan Tsvangirai, the then MDC-T presidential candidate polled 47.9% of the votes compared to 43.2% polled by Mugabe (*BBC News*, 2 May 2008). What added credence to the opposition claim was that the presidential election results took up to five weeks to be announced when all the other results had already been announced (*Ibid*). To the MDC supporters, in the words of their leader Morgan Tsvangirai, this was "scandalous day light robbery" (*Ibid*) that denied Tsvangirai the highest political office in Zimbabwe. Partly because of this pent up anger, it was no surprise that it was the urbanites from Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru (*The Guardian*, 18 November 2017) who were very vocal during the Saturday 18 November 2017 demonstrations that called for Mugabe to heed calls to step down.

Added to the foregoing, the Mugabes were also disliked for engaging in corruption and unquenching thirst for accumulation of

economic wealth against the background of worsening livelihoods. As already pointed out earlier, Grace Mugabe had a penchant for expensive exotic accumulations, including a very dear wedding ring, expensive clothes and tastes. In this area, she was not alone as her two sons with the then President Mugabe, Robert Junior and Chatunga, were also famed for expensive lifestyles that included late night partying, a taste for expensive alcohol and expensive hotels and expensive women (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 8 December 2017). At times, unintelligently, the two boys flaunted their wealth and even castigated the other poor Zimbabweans of lacking ingenuity (Killalea, 2017)). Grace's other son, Russell Goreraza, also lived large in a sea of poverty as he was reported to have purchased a slew of Rolls Royce vehicles in 2017 (*Newsday*, 19 September 2017).

Added to the basket of expensive tastes for the Mugabe family were their expensive annual holidays to the Far East, one of which allegedly gobbled up to US\$6 million in 2016 within a month-long period (Chikowore, 22 December 2016). As well, the former First Family did not relent on their annual ritual of expensively commemorating Robert Mugabe's birthday on the 21st of February, amid worsening poverty levels in the country. Usually, each birthday celebration chewed in excess of US\$1 million (Dzirutwe, 27 February 2016). The birthday for Mugabe on 21 February later became a public holiday (*BBC News*, 27 November 2017).

Furthermore, the Mugabe family was reported to own expensive mansions in several countries, including the palatial mansion in Borrowdale, Harare, commonly known as the "Blue Roof". The collection of houses was said to extend to other places such as the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, South Africa, Singapore and Dubai (*The Sun*, 20 November 2017). The pictures of some of the houses were even circulated on the internet news sites and social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook (*Pindula News*, 19 November 2017), which worsened the hatred for the Mugabe and his family.

In terms of unquenchingly thirsty for wealth accumulation, the Mugabe family reportedly owned up to 14 farms in the country's Mashonaland West, East and Central provinces particularly in the

most fertile and well-endowed soils regions (*The Sun*, 20 November 2017). As if this was not enough, the family at times forcibly evicted white farmers and newly-resettled black farmers, alike as in the case of Justice Ben Hlatshwayo (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 February 2010) and the Manzou Farm black farmers (*The Herald*, 13 January 2015) who were evicted at different times to make way for the establishment of the then First Family's farming empire. Regarding the Manzou Farm evictions, what was observed was that at times the evictions were violently done using state apparatus such as the police and intelligence officers who vandalised homes, property and wealth of the farmers who had been resettled on this property since 2000 (*The Herald*, 13 January 2015). This not only drew the ire of the resettled farmers themselves who felt brutalised, but also human rights campaigners who sometimes assisted the Manzou farmers to go to court for a just determination and continued occupancy of the farm (Sibanda, 2017).

Among the white Zimbabwean community, Mugabe was very unpopular for being the leader of the Third Chimurenga, which was notorious for the disorderly, and often violent, white farm takeovers (Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen, 2003). On the whole, the forced evictions of resettled families, especially at Manzou, presented the Mugabe family as heartless and self-serving as the evictions were meant to create space for a game sanctuary and sometimes these displacement attempts were done during unfavourable weather such as rainy seasons or during cold periods (*Ibid*).

Lack of support from the international community

Broadly, this section extends on the dislike of Mugabe, but focusses on foreign dislike, which led to a lack of active external help to prop up his regime. To this end, the current section troubles how the absence of noticeable international support for Mugabe was a factor that contributed to national economic deterioration and ultimately his demise. Save for some timid words of support by the Zambian President, Edgar Lungu (*Lusaka Times*, 24 November 2017), there was no public support for the continuation of Mugabe's

regime. This lack of public support for Mugabe during the ‘November Revolution’ cast him as an isolated leader without genuine international friends. In total, there was no word of support for Mugabe or condemnation of how he had been removed from power from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) or from the United Nations Organisation (UNO) condemning the military-backed transition against Mugabe. It has to be mentioned that Mugabe had claimed that the Chinese were his all-weather friends (*New Zimbabwe.com*, 18 November 2017). However, the Chinese did not raise any public sympathy with him (*Ibid*), probably in line with their policy of not interfering in domestic issues in sovereign states. The international silence to the Zimbabwe transition also stood in sharp contrast to Mugabe’s active role in propping up international leaders in distress. To this end, Mugabe had actively supported the Laurent and Joseph Kabila’s governments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo at differing moments, for example, during the DRC war between 1998 and 2002 (Bond and Manyanya, 2003). Mugabe had also thwarted a potential mercenary-led *coup de tat* in Equatorial Guinea in 2006 that targeted to dethrone President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo by arresting the mercenaries in Harare during a stop-over to purchase additional arsenal for the illegal operation (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 5 May 2006). On the contrary, many nations in deed or word, overtly supported the ouster of Mugabe. Countries such as Botswana hailed the transition with former President Ian Khama openly calling for Mugabe to step down (*Newsday*, 21 November 2017) and attended Mnangagwa’s inauguration, which was an open endorsement of the military-backed transition (*Nehanda TV*, 24 November 2017).

Conclusion

In the final analysis, this chapter has reflected on the centrality of Grace Mugabe’s hate language campaign series during ZANU-PF rallies in the downfall of her husband, Robert Mugabe. These speeches, which were made in the months of October 2014 and 2017, were meant to clear potential strong opposition to her rise in ZANU-

PF and government by Joyce Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa, then sitting Vice Presidents, respectively, as well as from their perceived supporters within ZANU-PF, the government and in the security services. While the campaign initially brought Grace some success, especially the recalling of Mujuru and briefly for Mnangagwa and her ascendancy to lead the ZANU-PF's Women League, on the whole, the hate language campaign pogrom generated for her and her husband a lot of dislike from various quarters such as the war veterans from the Second Chimurenga, some sections of the military top leadership and from within ZANU-PF. Critically, the undiplomatic and denigrating language was directly linked to the intervention of the army in the ZANU-PF succession dynamics, which culminated in the military intervention on 14 and 15 November 2017 through 'Operation Restore Legacy' that formed a strong foundation for the dismissal of Robert Mugabe from power. The chapter has also acknowledged a basket of other factors for the fall of Mugabe including a long standing economic crisis, lack of foreign support, the military factor through 'Operation Restore Legacy' and a growing hatred of Robert Mugabe by many Zimbabweans.

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A Forgiven Sinner? Robert Mugabe and the Strained Catholic Relations

Canisius Mwandayi

Introduction

In November 2017, a statement by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) thanked Robert Mugabe for the “good work” he had done as the President of Zimbabwe for 37 years but was quick to point out: “We forgive him for any shortcomings during his long tenure of office” (ZCBC, cited in *Catholic Herald*, 27 November 2017). Such a statement by the Catholic bishops summarises the controversy that surrounds Robert Mugabe. While he, at times, had good relations with the church, as seen in him receiving holy communion on a regular basis, as well as attending important church functions such as the burial of the late Pope John Paul II in 2005, there were darker moments as well when he came out vicious through word and action towards the same church he purported to be a member.

Employing a socio-historical analysis, this chapter seeks to make a follow-up on Mugabe’s relations with the Catholic Church, highlighting in particular the strained moments. The chapter is propelled by the hand of forgiveness that was stretched towards Mugabe at the end of an era of his battle with the same church he claimed to be a member. The chapter argues that by extending a hand of forgiveness to Mugabe, the Catholic Church demonstrated what ‘true Christianity’ is all about as expatiated by C.S. Lewis (1949:182) who said: “To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”

Mugabe, the Catholic

Born at the Catholic Mission Station of Kutama on 21 February 1924, Robert Mugabe grew up a product of the missionary system (Meredith, 2007). The moment his mother Bona started taking him with her to mass, Robert is said to have become almost as pious as his mother (*Independent Online*, 2008). Her mother, who belonged to the Shonhiwa family of Kutama (Mushohwe, 2016), was fanatically religious and had arrived at Chishawasha Mission Station with hopes of becoming a nun. She, however, saw herself getting married to Gabriel Chatunga Mugabe at Chishawasha, where Mugabe and his siblings grew up and herself becoming a teacher at Chishawasha before they relocated to Kutama (*Ibid*).

The founder of the mission station at Kutama, Fr Jean-Baptiste Loubière, a French national, taught the local African people to regard the entire outside world as an evil place that would engulf them unless they sought guidance through constant prayer (*Independent Online*, 2008). Taking the teachings of the church to heart, Mugabe's mother is said to have been made to wear high-necked, ankle-length dresses. In an interview with Heidi Holland, Mugabe confirmed:

In those days, the Catholics were living saints, or at least the church thought it could make them living saints. We lived in Christian villages. We were not allowed to go out... You could go out on a mission to see your granny, but you had to be back by 5pm (Mugabe cited in Holland, 2008).

Mugabe was soon to outlive his brothers, Raphael and Michael. During an eulogy for his late sister, Bridgette, in Zvimba, Mugabe revealed that the death of his older brothers Raphael (six months) in 1922 and the poisoning of Michael (15), in 1934, really tore his mother up and may have led his father to abandon the family (Mugabe cited in Zaniest, 2014). Devastated not only by the death of his adored elder brother, Michael, but also the abandonment by his father, Robert Mugabe faced an impecunious, lonely, bitter and emotionally deprived childhood (Meredith, 2007). In regards to his

father, a cousin to the family, James Chikerema during an interview in 2000 pointed out that “Mugabe has never forgiven him for that” (Chikerema cited in Meredith, 2007:21). His parental grandfather is said to have done his best to compensate for the absent father by introducing Robert to the basics of life like catching birds for consumption. While Robert appears to have appreciated the tender care that was given him by his grandfather, it was, however, to his austere mother that he looked forlornly for affection. In the years following the deaths of his siblings, he attended mass daily with his mother and twice on Sundays (*Independent Online*, 2008).

Having become his mother’s oldest and favourite child, by default though, Robert is said to have become her pillar of support (Holland, 2008). Given that she could not cope with the grief of being abandoned by her husband, Bona is said to have become dependent on the sensitive and caring Robert. On his part, to cope with the situation, Robert buried himself in books while his siblings and classmates teased him as a mummy’s boy and a coward who would not play and fight with the other boys (*Independent Online*, 2008).

In 1931, an Irish Jesuit priest, Father Jerome O’Hea, came to replace Fr Loubière at Kutama and it was in no time that he noticed the solemn, talented Robert Mugabe and began to nurture him. The priest, Father O’Hea is said to have gone out of his way to help the lonely and shy Robert whom he found to having an “unusual gravitas” in terms of his seriousness and “an exceptional mind and an exceptional heart” (Holland, 2008). As a way to show attention towards him as well as to make him get used to other boys of his age, Fr O’Hea would often take him with other boys for a ride. In his interview with Holland, Mugabe recalls how Fr O’Hea acted as a father figure to him saying:

Yes, yes. And every Thursday he used to carry us on the lorry; drive to the river, to a pool, where he taught us how to swim. Some youngsters used to sit on him [gestures to his chest] as he did backstroke. He was a nice Irishman, yes. Only an Irishman could do that; an Englishman couldn’t (Mugabe cited in *Independent Online*, 2008).

The imprint that the Irish Jesuit priest had on Robert was lasting. He instilled a love of learning in Mugabe, who later went on to earn seven degrees during the 14 years he spent whilst he was in incarceration for anti-colonial activities. It was the priest, as testified by Christopher Woolf (2017), who first introduced Robert Mugabe to revolutionary politics and techniques and later to learn Marxist ideas from white students while at Fort Hare College in South Africa. This explains why Mugabe remained grateful to the Jesuits and an admirer of the Catholic Church throughout his tenure in office. More like Adolf Hitler, Mugabe had this to say: “I was brought up by the Jesuits and I’m most grateful. I benefited from their teaching enormously” (Mugabe cited in Kirchick, 2007). In April 1980, the educated Robert Mugabe became the first Prime Minister of the new nation of Zimbabwe.

Timeline of key moments in Mugabe’s relations with the Roman Catholic Church

1980: Independence of Zimbabwe

At the dawn of independence in 1980, it was inevitable that the new parameters of Church-State relations were to be informed and shaped by the church bodies’ previous relations with Ian Smith’s colonial regime that was in office and the two nationalist movements, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), that were soon to form a new government. Whilst at least three church bodies are worth to mention at this time; the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) – a collection of established churches, the ZCBC – purely Catholic and the Heads of Denominations – a conglomeration of Protestant and Catholic leaders, it was the ZCC and ZCBC which in particular had existed prior to independence (Maxwell, 1995).

Back in the 1970s, the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops Conference had begun giving its support to the Patriotic Front, a collective term to refer to both ZANU and ZAPU, and became so vocal, through its Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), against the atrocities which were being perpetrated by the Smith regime against Africans

(McLaughlin, 1996; Maxwell, 1995). This is further supported by Timothy Scarnecchia (2017) who notes that a book commissioned by CCJP in 1975 entitled *Man in the Middle* chronicled not only the brutality of the counter-insurgency tactics used by the Rhodesian forces but also the terror which was used by African nationalists which made life so tough for the ordinary rural populations who were caught in the middle. The ZCC, which by then was known as the Christian Council, tended not to support the Patriotic Front but rather chose to throw its weight behind the African National Congress which was headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa. In 1978 it went on to support the Internal Settlement which was negotiated between Ian Smith and Abel Muzorewa himself but was shunned by the Patriotic Front (Maxwell, 1995).

It is not surprising, therefore, that when Robert Mugabe won the general elections in 1980 and took office, memories of the roles that had been played by church bodies during the war were fresh in his mind. He and his government tended to align themselves more with the Catholic Church. The new government's dealings with the Christian Council which now had come to be renamed ZCC was rather casual. As David Maxwell (1995:112) succinctly puts it, "As a consequence for backing the wrong horse, the new ZCC was immediately suspect in the eyes of the ZANU (PF) government." The aligning of the new government with the Catholic Church at the time it took power was well pronounced during the night of 18 April 1980 when Prince Charles took down the Union Jack flag and raised the Zimbabwean flag for the first time. To bless the occasion was the Catholic Archbishop of Harare, Patrick Chakaipa (Chifera, 2016; Taylor, 2003). As testified in Chirongoma (2008), the morning after the Independence night events, Mugabe and his wife, Sally, together with most senior members of the party, attended a special independence mass at the Sacred Heart Catholic Cathedral. This was not the only event which saw the Catholic Church working closely with the government of Robert Mugabe.

It should be noted, however, that while the Catholic Church worked closely with Mugabe's government, it made it clear from the beginning that it was independent from the State. In their

independence message to the nation in 1980, the Catholic Bishops said:

In a plural society like Zimbabwe, it is important to have a clear view of the relationship between the Church and the State. The Church is not identified with any political community, nor is she bound to any political system. Rather, her function is to be the moral conscience of the nation, the sign and safeguard of the supreme value of the human person (ZCBC, 1980).

On the part of the government itself, while the first President of the country, Canaan Banana, argued that he conceptualised Church-State relations in terms of a 'symbiosis' (Banana, 1991), hardly was there anything in his attitude towards the Church to prove that this meant anything in practice. As rightly pointed out by Maxwell (1995: 111), "during the first decade of independence, the Zimbabwe government was to love the Church only for its body and proved positively uninterested in its prophetic qualities."

1982 – 1987: The Gukurahundi Massacre

While the Catholic Church's relations with the new Zimbabwean government had been fairly moving on well, a twist to the relations came when Mugabe and his cronies in 1982 embarked on a campaign against the Ndebele ethnic group. In the pretext of trying to suppress a dissident uprising which threatened to undermine the elected government through various acts of sabotage (*Nehanda Radio*, 23 November 2012), Mugabe, in December 1982, commissioned the Fifth Brigade which had been trained by the North Koreans and it descended in Matabeleland North at the end of January 1983 (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003; Meredith, 2003). The real issue that had led to the 'dissident problem' in the eyes of Ndlovu-Gatsheni (*Ibid*), lay in the new government's security obsession which led to the defection of large numbers of ex-ZIPRA (Nkomo's army) combatants and the forced demobilisation of many others from the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). Ex-ZIPRA combatants complained of being sidelined, being harassed and of threats to their

lives. Thus as a result of this failed army integration process, those who later turned out to be dissidents had been forced to lead the lives of fugitives. Though government-controlled media tried to portray the dissident problem as a hatched plan of ZAPU to overthrow the new government, hardly have researchers found any strong evidence linking it to the ZAPU party. The dissidents were actually comprised of various elements; in the group were deserters from the new ZNA, Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), former Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR), criminals from Bulawayo and Lupane as well as destabilisation groups which were sponsored by South Africans (Moorcraft and Chitiyo 2011). Being so diverse, the group hardly operated in a coordinated way and there was no clear leader as such of the group save for a notorious figure by the name Richard Gwesela who is said to have wreaked havoc in the Midlands Province shortly after independence and before the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 (Kawadza, 2015).

Though the Fifth Brigade managed to suppress the rebellion, it committed more atrocities perhaps than those committed by the dissidents themselves, by mercilessly killing and raping innocent souls. As covered in the report on massacres, the government used the offensive to launch a 'double-edged war' in Matabeleland. While it initially was directed towards dissidents, the government used it to attack ordinary civilians of Matabeleland (*Ibid*). In a spate of just six weeks, according to Meredith (2003), at least 2 000 civilian lives had perished, hundreds of homes destroyed and tens of thousands of civilians tortured. In total, the campaign is estimated to have killed around 20, 000 innocent lives (Doran, 2015), but according to the estimates of Ian Smith, the figure was as high as 30, 000 and the CIO's estimate was 18, 000 (Moorcraft & Chitiyo, 2011).

It was just soon after the initial killings and torture had commenced that a Catholic delegation including two bishops and the chairperson of CCJP on March 16, 1983 presented Mugabe with a comprehensive dossier as well as a pastoral statement which incriminated the army of gross mayhem and reign of terror in Matabeleland (Meredith, 2003). While deep inside him he knew that the dossier was quite correct, the only response Mugabe could

provide at this time was a refusal of all allegations of the atrocities. He rather chose to label the Bishops as “sanctimonious prelates” who “were playing to the international gallery” (Mugabe cited in Meredith, 2003:68). Not only did he question their being independent from external influence but he queried also their allegiance and loyalty to Zimbabwe. It was on these grounds that he concluded to say:

The Church of Zimbabwe, whatever the denomination, must abandon forever the tendency or temptation to play marionette for foreign so-called parent churches whose interests and perspectives may, and often will be, at variance with the best interests of our country (*Ibid*).

In Mugabe’s eyes, the Church was supposed to attune itself to the realities of the new dispensation that was obtaining in Zimbabwe.

In 1997, when the campaign was over, the CCJP and the Legal Resources Foundation jointly published a damning report which implicated Mugabe’s government of crimes against humanity and in particular against the minority Ndebele ethnic group. The Commission accused Mugabe’s government of following a ‘genocidal course’ against the Ndebele people (CCJP, 1997). The report could not enjoy wide circulation in the country as the Mugabe government took a hard stance to suppress it, curtailing thus its spread in the public fora. Just as he had rubbished in 1983 a dossier by a Catholic delegation, Mugabe once again showed he had no time for such a report. He castigated it as merely the work of “mischief makers wearing religious garb” (Mugabe cited in Meredith, 2003:74).

The sharp dig at the Church by Mugabe spelt nothing other than disaster in his future relations with the Church. What it simply meant was that Mugabe was trying to deny the Church of its moral voice, yet that was practically impossible if the Church was to stand in the footsteps of its Master and Founder Jesus Christ. All he dreamt about was an endorsing Church, a Church that would sing his praises no matter what and mum if he chose to exterminate or banish at will whoever he considered a political foe. As shall be reflected in the

ongoing discussion, it was this ‘yes Sir’ disposition that the Catholic Bishops refused to give Mugabe leading him to feel disgusted by the behaviour of these men of the cloth.

1998-1999: Zimbabwe’s economic meltdown

According to Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya (2002), the precise moment when the Zimbabwean economy began to tumble was the late morning of 14 November 1997 when, in just over a four-hour period, the Zimbabwean dollar lost 74% of its value. The chief catalyst behind the fall was Mugabe’s decision to reward each registered war veteran Z\$50.000 pension pay out plus Z\$2.000 per month to quieten their protest over his failure to provide them with decent jobs and other survival needs. In 1998, Mugabe’s government took another ill calculated decision to deploy troops in support of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government that was fighting rebels. This decision was well in accord with other member states within the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The regional block had taken this bold move to bring about peace to the DRC, where rebels of the M23 Movement were fighting against the government of Laurent Kabila. In sending the troops, the Zimbabwean government at that time had the opinion that SADC, the African Union as well as the United Nations were going to foot the bill of this expensive adventure. As confirmed by the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Joey Bimha, the Zimbabwean troops were only going to be deployed for peacekeeping and the cash-strapped Zimbabwean government was not going to foot the bill. He explained the mission saying:

This is what is called a neutral international force and SADC will have to source out funding for it... Zimbabwe will contribute troops and of course at some expense to it but most of the expenses are going to be sourced from outside, from the African Union and even the United Nations (Bimha cited in *Voice of America*, 12 December 2012, para.9).

While all appeared rosy at the beginning, it later turned to be a costly mission that costed the Zimbabwean economy back home. Several economic analysts and political commentators would agree that this was a costly war that played a big part in the meltdown of the Zimbabwean economy. Among the vocal critics of the deployment of Zimbabwean troops to DRC was Rejoice Ngwenya who averred:

Even if we are part of the SADC family that has helped broker a lot of misunderstandings in Zimbabwe, the case of *déjà vu* and our experience in the DRC – a war that has no cause, and even considering our national resources, there is nothing that justifies our intervention in the DRC...We lost millions of dollars every day and that war was responsible for taking our economy down (Ngwenya cited in *Voice of America*, 12 December 2012, para.12).

When local Zimbabweans felt pressed by the biting economy and high interest rates as well as inflation, many took to the streets rioting. Earlier to the tumbling economy, there had been general discontent among the masses which had been triggered by both the 1995 parliamentary and 1996 presidential elections which many saw as non-events. Following the elections, relations between government and trade unions grew bitter and Harare was rocked by workers' demonstrations which saw property getting damaged as well as being looted by the rioters. The bitterness of the labour movement affected even commercial farms. According to *The Herald* (1 January 1998), 1997 saw farm workers collectively going on strike for the first time in the history of Zimbabwe (Laakso, 2004).

It was amidst all these challenges that were buffeting the nation of Zimbabwe that the Catholic Bishops in May 1998 released a Pastoral Letter: *Working for the Common Good*. The opening lines of that Pastoral letter summarized the prevailing situation that had engulfed the nation. The Bishops noted:

Fellow Zimbabwean citizens, there is no doubt that we live in a time of crisis for our beloved country and its people. The recent food

riots and the two national stay-away days are indications of a deep discontent and resentment (ZCBC, 1998:115).

In a veiled attack on the cronies around Mugabe, the Bishops went on to say: “There is resentment that a fortunate few can accumulate and flaunt such extremes of wealth in a display of power, oblivious to the serious poverty that is experienced by many” (ZCBC, 1998). Further criticising the failed government’s Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), the Bishops were not shy to point out that the programme had been introduced with little or no consultation or due explanation done. Instead of it mitigating the needs of the poor, it turned out to satisfy the wants of the rich with large amounts of public money which were being spent on luxuries and funding military expenditures at the expense of health and education (*Ibid*). Having a solid foundation in the Scriptures and in particular with the book of Amos which castigates the sinful ill-treatment of the poor by the rich in Israel, the Bishops must have felt their duty to stand in the shoes of Amos to castigate what they saw as a recurrence of the Israelite sinful situation in Zimbabwe.

2000 - 2002: Land seizures, parliamentary and presidential elections

The year 2000 came with a lot of anticipations as well as surprises. In the technological world, the general talk was of being Y2K compliant. While the numeronym Y2K was a common abbreviation for the 2000 software problem, in popular usage it literally got to mean a general preparedness for the new millennium (Fao, 1999). While there was much hyperbole of being Y2K compliant, there were hardly any noticeable changes in the country. The only area that saw real changes was land ownership in Zimbabwe. A number of White farmers in Zimbabwe saw their land seized from them in a violent campaign by thousands of landless Blacks backed by the Mugabe regime (Mamdani, 2008). Though the idea behind the exercise was a noble one in that it was an instrument of distributive justice and economic growth, the manner in which it was carried out was so chaotic hence, the often use of the term *jambanja* (“chaos”) in reference

to it (Alexander, 2006). Instead of pursuing the exercise in a courteous manner, Mugabe was forced to take it up as a matter of political expediency as he wanted to calm the war veterans who were now clamouring for the land they said they had fought for. According to Mubako, “land was one of the principal objectives of the war of liberation, through which Zimbabwe gained independence from Britain in 1980. Yet, 19 years after independence, that land was still in the hands of British settlers” (Mubako cited in Gowland, 2002:10). While at first Mugabe differed with war veterans who were clamouring for land, calling them ‘armchair critics’ at the inaugural conference of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) in 1992 (Mamdani, 2008), two decades down the line, Mugabe’s position had changed. As observed by Mahmood Mamdani, the issue of praise as a ‘conciliator’ by the international community for ensuring the security and property of those whites who remained in Zimbabwe was of no longer importance to him. With so much to gain from putting his weight behind the land invasions by the war veterans, he announced that the government was not going to evict the war veterans who had taken land for themselves. One can also say that Mugabe put his weight behind the violent land seizures by the war veterans as a way to preempt the opposition party MDC which had started calling for land redistribution. In its election manifesto in 2000, the MDC party promised to stand for democracy, political pluralism, accountable governance, equitable development policies and economic growth. It promised to promote “people driven land reform” (Laakso, 2004).

Earlier in 1997, the Catholic Bishops had released a Pastoral Letter: *ZCBC Statement on Land Reform* after they had taken note of the government’s intention to solve the problem of equitable land distribution once and for all. In the Pastoral Letter, the Bishops had provided moral principles that were to guide the government and the people of Zimbabwe in the process of land distribution. Among the key principles they had raised was a suitable mechanism to ensure that justice, equity and fairness in the distribution process prevailed. The State was also to ensure that farm workers who would lose their

employment as a result of the redistribution exercise had alternative employment or land on which to settle (ZCBC, 1997).

When the Church realised that all these moral principles and proposals were being ignored when the actual land seizures had begun, the Bishops on 17 April 2000 released an *Easter Message* in which they reiterated their call for the sharing of land and its resources equitably. They implored the citizens of Zimbabwe to shun violence and corruption during the process of land redistribution (ZCBC, 17 April 2000). Since the year 2000 was marked also by Parliamentary elections which were marred by political violence and abductions during the campaign period, the Bishops were forced to release another statement on 7 June 2000: *Use your Vote, it is your Right*. In this statement the Bishops noted that [political] violence in Zimbabwe by then had already claimed more than 26 lives and injured many more and property worth millions of dollars had been destroyed. In a clear attack on the government of Robert Mugabe, the Bishops said: “We call upon the government to ensure that its organs like the police and the media revisit their national obligation of service to the nation and all its citizens and not be partisan” (ZCBC, 7 June 2000).

The intimidation and violence that had characterised the Parliamentary elections had hardly been a thing of the past when preparations for the 2002 Presidential elections were set in motion. War veterans were seen on the forefront leading a violent campaign and their harassment of the electorate was extended even to urban and industrial areas (Laakso, 2004). When the ballot was eventually cast in March, Mugabe emerged as the winner despite the calls by the opposition as well as international observers that the elections were flawed and unfair (Nkiwane, 2002). Coincidentally, as the political atmosphere was marked by a hunger for level playground, there was drought which caused a severe food shortage not only in Zimbabwe but also in most of the Southern African region and the government was forced to embark on a food distribution programme. The manner in which the food was distributed became a politicised issue and there was so much cronyism along political party lines and corruption.

Noticing the ill that had bedevilled the country, the Catholic Bishops were once again on the throat of the Mugabe government, accusing it of partisanship and corrupt practices. In August 2002 they issued a statement: *Appeal for Food in Zimbabwe* in which they openly told the government that it was becoming more and more difficult for the ordinary poor citizens to make ends meet as exploitation of man by man had risen to unprecedented levels. The Bishops thus urged the government to quickly depoliticise the procurement and distribution of food and put in place measures to minimize the acquisition of food by threats, corruption or exploitation (ZCBC, August 2002). This was followed by yet another Pastoral Letter in March 2003: *A Call to Metanoia: Listen to the Inner Voice* in which the Bishops, with great concern, noted that there was no sign that corruption was being dealt with effectively by the government. They courageously told the government of Robert Mugabe that it had failed to provide leadership that enabled the creation of an environment that enhanced truth, justice, love and freedom (ZCBC, March 2003). While the Bishops talked, Mugabe appeared to take less care of whatever they were saying.

Looking at the events from 1997 when Mugabe warned the Church of Zimbabwe to abandon the tendency of being puppets of Western churches after the CCJP reported on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the repeated attacks on Mugabe's government by the Bishops, one can easily tell that the relations between Mugabe and the Church were increasingly turning bad. While Mugabe appeared to block his ears from whatever the Bishops were saying, if his inner voice of conscience was still alive, he could have been deeply aware that he was going off compass but the sweetness of power that lay his hands made him have none of whatever the Bishops were advising him.

2005: Operation Murambatsvina

As the country witnessed a biting economy and a general exodus of the rural folk into towns, those who owned houses in the suburbs took this as an opportunity to boost their meagre income by extending their houses or building extra rooms on their property. The

move eased the accommodation crisis that had hit the towns and also enabled an entrepreneurship spirit which resulted in many being able at least to put food on their tables through durawall tuck-shops as well as production of multi-faceted goods in places like Siyaso ('bother not') in Harare. While an enabling environment had been created to mitigate the harsh forces of the economy, the government of Robert Mugabe in 2005 introduced an operation called *Murambatsvina* (remove dirt). The operation was completely a reversal of the little gains that people had made in a biting economic environment. Instead of acknowledging these gains, the government at that time saw spirited entrepreneurship as a sign of retrogression of the economy. Such a mentality is reflected well in the words of Mugabe's then Police Commissioner, Augustine Chihuri, who demeaned the entrepreneurs saying: "We must clean the country of the crawling mass of maggots bent on destroying the economy" (Chihuri cited in Meredith, 2007:235). This operation saw most residents of high density suburbs getting their houses destroyed and many were left homeless. The argument proffered by the government was that such houses had been built or extended without the approval of the city councils. Though the government hid behind issues of approval as noted by Marongwe (2003), it was actually a way to reduce the masses that had swelled towns. The move was actually a political tactic in that during the Parliamentary and Presidential elections of 2000 and 2002, the majority of urbanites had voted for Morgan Tsvangirai. There was thus a latent fear within government circles that these urbanites could lead a revolution that could eventually lead result in the removal of the incumbent government.

Following the house demolitions, the government, unfortunately, did not provide enough houses for the affected people but it also encouraged those affected to go back to their villages and live there. Many people, including women with babies, children of school age, the old and the sick, were forced to sleep in the open air at winter temperatures (Meredith, 2007). The high rate of unemployment and the high rate of urban migration increased the rate of poverty as it resulted in house shortages and increased urban unemployment.

Empathising with the displaced and suffering peoples, the Catholic Bishops again felt that it was their obligation to stand with the people. In June 2005, they released a Pastoral Letter: *The Cry of the Poor*. In this letter, the Bishops castigated the move that the government had taken in arbitrarily disregarding people's rights to shelter, food, education, health care and employment without proper planning and timing. They protested: "No secular authority, no group, or individual should be allowed to violate such rights" (ZCBC, June 2005).

As a counter response to what the Bishops were saying, Mugabe unleashed a series of blistering attacks on the Church. During the official opening of the Zion Christian Church Headquarters at Mbungu Estates on 22 April 2005, Mugabe took this as an opportunity to praise the ZCC leadership and at the same time lambast the Catholic Church leaders. He ranted:

I am confused by my own Catholic bishops; they must learn from you (ZCC leaders). Often, Catholic bishops expose that they are not their own men; they are mere puppets of Western countries. I grew up in a Catholic Church but now I am totally frustrated by these so-called men of God who lie. All Catholic bishops are liars; they demonise my party every day (Mugabe cited in Ndou, 2011).

While somehow putting up with the Black clergy within the Catholic Church, he directed a sharp jibe at the White clergy saying: "I observed how they operate and my conclusion is that almost three quarters of them who are whites feed people with lies" (Mugabe cited in Ndou, 2011). Not willing to acknowledge what the Bishops were saying, he rather saw the reason for his attack as squarely falling on the heads of the white clergy who were busy pursuing Western interests and agendas. Over a week later, at another Indigenous African Parish, Mugabe again alleged that Catholic Bishops were liars and puppets of Western countries (Kirchick, 2007).

Despite his disappointment with the Catholic leadership, Mugabe never signalled any intention to leave the Catholic Church and to the surprise of many, he featured himself in Rome at the funeral of the

late John Paul II. Kirchick (*Ibid*) was therefore right to say: “Despite his Marxist pretensions and passionate rhetoric against the West, Robert Mugabe has long been an admirer of the Catholic Church.”

Later in September 2006, the Catholic Bishops joined with other Christian bodies: the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), to produce a document: *The Zimbabwe We Want*. The document was the roadmap that the men of the cloth envisaged was ideal for peace-building and socio-economic development in Zimbabwe. What they implied, in other words, was that the Mugabe government had failed. Instead of putting in place progressive systems, the government was rather revoking the Ian Smith repressive pieces of legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (ZCBC, 2007; *The Zimbabwe We Want*, 2006).

Looking at Mugabe within the short space of time between his attacks on the Catholic Bishops calling them liars before the ZCC leadership and his immediate appearance in the Vatican, one cannot fail to stop and wonder what kind of a ‘devout’ Catholic adherent he showed himself to be. While he pretended to show himself very devout before the world and in particular before the Vatican officials, his double standards left a lot to be desired. His shenanigans only helped to sever more his relations back home with the local Catholic Church. What he did truly confirms what Maxwell said earlier on that the Zimbabwean government was to love the Church only for its body and was totally uninterested in its prophetic qualities. Mugabe would only love a church if it added votes in his favour and this explains why he had the guts to denounce his own Catholic shepherds before a promising electorate of ZCC followers and also why later towards the harmonised election of 2013, he had the guts to put on Church regalia of the Johane Marange Apostolic Sect in Marange (Machingura, 2012). Alluding also to Mugabe’s church manipulation tactics just for the sake of votes is Bishau’s comment in which he says: “We know the president to be a Catholic and a staunch one, but to see him with an Apostolic Sect prophet’s rod and

staff has to be explained by some other theory other than he was converted into Johane Marange Sect” (Bishau, 2013:72).

2007 – 2008: Unprecedented socio-economic hardships

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, the Z\$1 was equal to US\$1.50 and at that time the highest note in currency circulation was Z\$20 (Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, 2011). Things were, however different by 2007 as basic goods started to disappear from the shelves of most shops around the country. By 2008, hyperinflation had reached unprecedented levels. As noted in *The Guardian* (2015), the Zimbabwean dollar was ruined by hyperinflation, which hit 500 billion per cent in 2008, and this was a time when prices of basic commodities in shops would change for more than 10 times a day at a rate of more than 500%. As people felt cornered by what was prevailing in the country, many got angry and the only way to vent the anger was through boycotts, strikes, demonstrations and uprisings. It was unfortunate that as they tried to express their feelings, the state’s law-enforcement agents: the police and soldiers, assaulted and beat up the unarmed and peaceful demonstrators and some detainees were severely manhandled (ZCBC, 2007). The abduction and torture of Jestina Mukoko was one among such cases which shook many not only in Zimbabwe but the whole human rights world beyond the Zimbabwean borders (Howden, 2009). The health delivery system disintegrated as health professionals either went on industrial action or fled the country (ZCBC, 2007) for greener pastures. The education sector was not spared as several students abruptly terminated their studies after many teachers had sought greener pastures in neighbouring countries. A study by Duri (2010) in which he investigates into the survival strategies by people leaving near the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border reveals that the industrial strike by teachers in 2008 saw some teachers crossing into Mozambique where they got employed in various informal sectors and pupils as young as 11 years old who had dropped out of school due to the harsh socio-economic environment were employed as *matunges* ‘potters of cross-border smugglers.’

Looking at the dire situation that the country was in, the Catholic Bishops took it up again with the government of Robert Mugabe when they released a Pastoral Letter: *God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed* on 5 April 2007. Reflecting on the deep crisis that was facing the nation, they averred: “We have concluded that the crisis of our country is, in essence, a crisis of governance and a crisis of leadership apart from being a spiritual and moral crisis” (ZCBC, 5 April 2007). They identified the root cause of the crisis with the government’s reinforcement of the repressive POSA and AIPPA legislations (*Ibid*).

During the April 2007 independence celebrations, Mugabe in his address to the nation saw this as a perfect opportunity to respond to the Catholic Bishops’ letter of the same year. He criticised the letter as utter “nonsense” and regarded the Bishops as having become politicians which, for him, was a dangerous path because his government could start treating them as political foes (Dzirutwe, 2007). Cited verbatim, he fumed:

If I had gone to church and the priest had read that so-called pastoral letter, I would have stood up and said nonsense ... The bishops have decided to turn political. And once they turn political, we regard them as no longer being spiritual and our relations with them would be conducted as if we are dealing with political entities, and this is quite a dangerous path they have chosen for themselves (Mugabe cited in Dzirutwe, 2007).

Just two days after his denigrating speech towards the Catholic Bishops, Mugabe saw another opportunity to reiterate his strong words towards the clerics when he addressed his party’s Central Committee Meeting on 20 April 2007. He lashed out at the Bishops: “They have gone wrong, sadly, very sadly. This is an area we warn them not to tread. It was a sorry letter, a disgraceful piece of work, an error, a disastrous error and we shall tell them when we meet them” (*Ibid*).

Among the clerics who were a real bother to Mugabe was the former Archbishop Pius Ncube. Ncube emerged as a highly courageous and critical voice and was bold enough to call on people

to rise up against Mugabe's rule. He even declared his readiness to go in front of blazing guns (Chitando, Taringa and Mapuranga, 2014). In response to Pius Ncube, Mugabe accused him of peddling falsehoods about the manner in which the government was being run. He then urged people not to pay attention to such misguided church leaders (*Ibid*). Through his network of intelligence, Mugabe orchestrated a plan to silence Ncube. When State television aired grainy pictures of Pius Ncube's adulterous affair, Mugabe seized that opportunity to nail a final blow to his archrival. He teased Ncube saying that he would pray for him "so he has some good manners" (Mugabe cited in Kirchick, 2007). He went on to say, "I also know God; I am a Roman Catholic. I am a person who belongs to the Church, but I didn't have an affair with anyone" (*Ibid*). Though Mugabe claimed himself to be much smarter, it is in the public domain that he sired two children with his then secretary, Grace Marufu (now his wife), while his first wife, Sally, was on her deathbed. Reckoning the period when the affair could have started and the part Grace played in Mugabe's life, Yalibnan says: "It was the early 1990s when President Robert Mugabe's eye fell upon one of his shy young typists. She would become his wife, a ferociously ambitious politician and, more than two decades later, a contributor to the downfall of her 93-year-old husband" (Yalibnan, 17 November 2017, para.2).

The year 2007 can possibly be regarded as the peak of the sour relations between Mugabe and the Catholic Church. Mugabe could not hide his anger towards the Church and worse towards his thorn in the flesh Pius Ncube. To show his lack of any iota of respect towards the Church at this time, he orchestrated through his intelligence network Ncube's downfall. The manner he allowed state television, ZBC TV, to repeatedly and shamelessly air pictures of Ncube's adulterous affair shows that he was prepared to destroy the Church he purported to belong on the altar of political power. What Mugabe had set out to do was tantamount to peeing in the very womb that bore him.

2008: Harmonised elections

Amidst the tension that was in the country, 2008 saw the nation conducting harmonised elections. While Morgan Tsvangirai claimed victory in the presidential elections, the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) argued that he had failed to garner the simple majority which was required to win the elections, hence it called for a re-run of the Presidential elections (The Guardian, 4 May 2008). In the fear of losing again to Tsvangirai, state agents pursued a violent campaign that left many maimed, some dead and others homeless and eventually Morgan Tsvangirai had to pull out of the run-off due to alleged intimidation and Mugabe won the presidency (Dzirutwe, 2018). The 2008 elections, especially the presidential run-off, as argued by Sipeyiye (2015), will go down in history as the election in which the worst violence was experienced and it claimed an estimated figure of 200 lives.

It was against this background of torture, intimidation and murder of some members of the opposition that the Catholic Bishops had to issue another statement on 12 June 2008: *A Call for an Immediate Stop to Violence*. In this letter, the Bishops again appealed to the security apparatus of Robert Mugabe's government that it needed to value and protect the life and human rights of every individual. They categorically stated: "We call for the de-politicisation of the armed and uniformed forces and traditional leaders. We call for an immediate cessation of violence and all provocative statements and actions" (ZCBC, 2008:322-323).

The orgy of violence, murder and intimidation committed with the full knowledge and blessings of Mugabe could surely have not exonerated him from a moral judgement that his acts were indeed sinful in themselves. Being the moral conscience of the society, there is no way the Bishops could have condoned such acts except to call for an immediate stop to them as it seriously severed relations not only between them and Mugabe's government but also left the country in a state of anarchy and gruesome pain. In the eyes of the Bishops, people of Zimbabwe were reacting against the 'structures of sin' in the society. To drive home the point to Mugabe and his cronies that their behaviour was rooted in sin, the Bishops cited the words

of John Paul II who said: “structures of sin are rooted in personal sin, and always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove. And they grow stronger, spread, and become the source of other sins, and so influence people’s behaviour” (ZCBC, 2007:3009).

2009 – 2017: Unity Government and beyond

Following the elections of June 2008 in which Mugabe declared himself the winner, the nation of Zimbabwe was once again caught up in political and economic stagnation. To see the country on its feet again, talks towards unity between the contending political parties were initiated and this eventually saw the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008 and the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009 (Dziva, Dube and Manatsa, 2013). With the unity government in place, the economic woes of the country eased and there was general political stability. The inclusive government lasted until 2013 when harmonised elections were held (*Ibid*).

During the period of the inclusive government, the Catholic Bishops remained concerned about the failure in the implementation of all tenets of the Global Political Agreement. In their address to the nation on 14 January 2011: *Let us Work for the Common Good*, the Bishops noted that failure in the implementation of all the tenets of the GPA was leading to continued isolation of the country from the greater part of the international community as well as the postponement of national healing, recovery, restoration and enjoyment of fundamental human rights by all (ZCBC, 14 January 2011).

Three months after the July 2013 elections were over, the Catholic Bishops tore into Robert Mugabe’s empty election manifesto in which he had promised to create more than a million jobs and improve welfare in all the key sectors of the people’s lives. In their publication: *Restoration and Peace in Zimbabwe*, they lamented: “We note with apprehension that three months after the dust from the elections began to settle down, there are no visible prospects for

improvement in the spheres of life in Zimbabwe that cry for restoration to give people hope for a better life” (ZCBC, 2013:372). Further elaborating their point that no visible prospects of improvement were anywhere to be seen, they noted:

Our industrial sites carry the appearance of ghost towns because the once-vibrant manufacturing sector is now largely moribund. The dignity of our people has been severely eroded as they have become reduced to sellers of cheap goods and products at street corners in our cities in order to survive. Daily water and power cuts, shortage of medicines, equipment and professional personnel in our hospitals, chaos and carnage on our roads, raw sewage flowing in the streets of our towns and cities – the list of what reduces us as a people, our dignity and our hope for a better life is long (ZCBC, 2013:373).

Following on their message in *Restoration and Peace in Zimbabwe*, the Bishops in August 2014 took it up again with the government by releasing: *Work Together for the Common Good: ‘Watchman, how much longer the night’?* Seeing that Mugabe and his government were taking their time to deliver on the number of areas that the Bishops and the nation expected them to address, they wrote: “We have waited to see signs of these things and we are still waiting, and we are prompted to ask with Isaiah 21: 11: ‘Watchman, how much longer the night?’” (ZCBC, August 2014). While they acknowledged the drafting of the 2013 Constitution and the economic blueprint, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), as having the same vision enshrined in the document *The Zimbabwe We Want*, they felt the present crisis lay in the concern with the idols of power, profit and money, and not with the value of the human person (*Ibid*). Though they did not name Mugabe and his cronies by name, they decried a culture of selfishness and absence of concrete actions by the government to weed out corrupt activities when they said:

We have to admit that levels of selfishness, and a desire to accumulate personal wealth by any means, exist among us and we note

the absence of decisive action to halt corruption. Corruption will not end unless and until culprits are brought to book (*Ibid*).

These very concerns that the Catholic Bishops raised were the very ones that formed the basis of the Operation Restore Legacy in November 2017 that saw Mugabe falling from power and the arrest of some of his corrupt cronies who had an insatiable appetite for personal wealth.

The Catholic Church's 'dilemma' over Mugabe

Admittedly, Mugabe was a controversial figure within the Catholic Church during his reign. The controversy stems from the fact that while at home he had running battles with the local leadership of the Catholic Church, while on the international scene he presented himself a devout Catholic. On 8 April 2005, he got himself counted among the Catholic dignitaries who attended the late Pope John Paul II's funeral (*The Irish Times*, 7 April 2005). During the Beatification Ceremony of John Paul II on 1 May 2011, Mugabe again found himself in Rome. When John Paul II was canonised on 27 April 2014, Robert Mugabe could not miss that occasion as well (*Telegraph*, 27 April 2014).

The question of double standards by the Roman Catholic Church when dealing with Mugabe can hardly escape one's gaze. If the local Catholic Church, which knew the man quite well, had taken a condemnatory approach towards his leadership, one would naturally have expected the Vatican to speak and act in the same manner with the local Bishops of and thus put him under interdict. Instead, the Vatican was seen dinning with a Head of State who was often at loggerheads with the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. During the Beatification Ceremony of John Paul II, the Vatican evaded criticism for hosting Mugabe by stating that had not been personally invited but as a head of a state with which the Vatican had relations, he was entitled to attend (Vatican spokesperson cited in *BBC News*, 30 April 2011). The 1929 Lateran Treaty which saw the recognition of the Vatican/Holy See as sovereign state, as noted by Kirchick

(2007), established a “diplomatic corridor” between the Vatican and the rest of the world, thus allowing people like Mugabe to be hosted by the Pope.

In the Pius Ncube case, instead of the Vatican standing with him, it rather chose to silence him regardless of all the courage, determination and resilience in calling a spade in relation to what Mugabe was doing. On being asked at that time why the Vatican had chosen to remove Pius from the political scene in Zimbabwe, the Vatican Deputy Spokesperson, Father Ciro Benedettini, speculated that his removal could simply have been the application of a church rule that bans priests and bishops from taking part in politics since Canon Law forbids members of the clergy from participating directly in politics (Benedettini cited in *Herald Scotland*, 2008).

Forgiving the ‘Sinner’

Apart from the Pastoral Letters, perhaps no individual in the Catholic Church was able to openly point out the transgressions of Mugabe as Pius Ncube did. In his interview with *Frontier Africa Television* just before his departure to Rome following his resignation from office, Ncube expressed his disappointment with Mugabe and his government saying:

I became outspoken because I got extremely hurt and broken by the way the Zimbabwean government has been treating people - treating them like things, killing them, depriving them of food, depriving them of voting rights, destroying their houses, harassing them, imprisoning them, torturing them, killing the economy... I’ve never desired to be a politician. I only began speaking up when human rights were abused. Mugabe is a megalomaniac. There is this big zest in him for power. He has committed crimes against humanity and it could land him in an unpleasant situation. He could find himself jailed (Pius Ncube cited in *Herald Scotland*, 22 March 2008: para.7).

If all what was said by Pius Ncube is anything to go by, then such were the wrongs and transgressions of Robert Mugabe that merited his indictment by the Church but no pronouncement of that nature

was ever made. One wonders then whether the local Catholic Church feared to put Mugabe under censure or suspending him from full membership. Did other Catholic Bishops in Zimbabwe feel as heartbroken by the misdemeanours of Robert Mugabe as Pius Ncube? While answers to these questions appear tricky to find, one should not forget Mugabe's dinning with the highest Roman Catholic authorities in the Vatican as well as Mugabe's invitation to some Church functions in some dioceses in Zimbabwe. At the burial of the late Archbishop Patrick Fani Chakaipa on 14 April 2003, Mugabe was among the mourners who gathered at Chishawasha Cemetery near Harare (Taylor, 2003). On 26 August 2006, Mugabe featured in Gweru's Mkoba Suburb at the Episcopal Ordination of Martin Munyanyi as the Roman Catholic Bishop of Gweru (Katsande, 2006). On 13 December 2014, Mugabe sent the then ZDF Commander General, Constantino Chiwenga, to deliver his speech on the Golden Jubilee of Fr Francis Ribeiro, a Catholic priest who vocally opposed colonial rule in Rhodesia (Karonga, 2014). Putting together these parallel situations, one can draw up at least three justifiable arguments that can help explain why Mugabe at the end appears to have got his way despite his fight with the local Catholic Church authorities in Zimbabwe.

In the first scenario, it is possible to talk about issues of politicking within the local Catholic Church itself. While all Bishops appeared signatories to the Pastoral Letters that were written to try and bring Mugabe to his senses, it cannot be ruled out that some of them personally supported Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party and could have even voted for him during elections. In as much as Bishops have never barred the laity from following the political party of their choice, they too can personally subscribe to a party of their choice. It is not a closed secret, for example, that the late Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa was a close associate of Mugabe (Taylor, 2003). It is even alleged that following the death of Chakaipa, Mugabe and his ZANU-PF stalwarts, who included Nathan Shamuyarira, were pushing for the proclamation of Chakaipa's National Hero Status through the Mashonaland West provincial executive which unfortunately was turned down by the Chakaipa family as well as

fellow Catholic Bishops (Mathuthu, 2003). The Bishops are said to have argued that burying Chakaipa at the National Heroes' Acre in Harare would have suggested that he was a ZANU-PF party member and could have discredited the Roman Catholic Church (Ibid). Commenting on the move that had been taken by Mugabe and his cronies, Pius Ncube derided the gesture saying: "It was just a joke. Some people wanted to score cheap political mileage because the whole issue is irrelevant and even Mugabe himself never raised it at the funeral" (Ncube cited in *Independent Catholic News*, 1 January 2003: para.1). In yet another story which names out the late Archbishop Chakaipa by name, Paul Taylor (2003) writes that it was a disgraceful decision when Chakaipa, together with some other Catholic bishops decided not to endorse the publication of *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace*, a report which had been jointly prepared by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation on the Gukurahundi atrocities in Matabeleland and the Midlands. This move they took, as he further argues, "created a perception in the minds of many people that some of our bishops were the commissars of ZANU-PF at prayer who wished only to protect and promote the image of Mugabe, their fellow Catholic" (Taylor, 2003: para.11). When Mugabe was again sworn into office as the President of Zimbabwe after the 2002 Presidential elections, in attendance were Archbishop Chakaipa himself and the two Bishops from Mutare: Bishop Alexio Churu Muchabaiwa and Bishop Patrick Mutume (Taylor, 2003). If the Bishops Conference was polarised like this, it could be easier to understand why possibly Mugabe never got censured or refused communion by the local Roman Catholic clergy and why at the end he got exonerated for his crimes.

The mediatory role played by the Catholic clergyman, Fr Fidelis Mukonori, between Mugabe and the former ZDF Commander General, Constantino Guveya Chiwenga, should also not be underrated in the equation seeking to understand why Mugabe at the end was extended a hand of forgiveness by the Zimbabwean Catholic authorities he had been tussling with during his reign. The Bishops, in the first place, acknowledged Fr Mukonori as one of their own. Having trust in him, they knew God would have used him to bring

Mugabe to his senses and acknowledge his shortcomings as well as understand that it was God's design that he should hand over the button stick to another to take over. As Fr Mukonori puts it himself:

It was something where we had to stand with the truth. What was important was to be frank with each other, telling each other the truth without emotions, but seeking the truth because that is what God wants. It is the work of God. There is a time when one has to rest while another person continues (Fr Mukonori cited in *The Chronicle*, 25 November 2017).

Under such circumstances not forgiving Mugabe would have been equal to reversing the gains made by Fr Mukonori as well as closing the doors of repentance in the Church.

The other justifiable argument one can make is that the Church has always advocated for motherly love even towards wayward children. One needs possibly to think about the words of the prophet Isaiah who said: "Can a mother forget her own baby? (Isaiah 49:15). Just like a patient and loving mother who does not cut ties with her baby despite all his/her mischief, the clergy should have felt that Mugabe was indeed a true but problem child of the Church. When his long reign finally came to an end in November 2017, it was indeed no irony to hear the Catholic Bishops say: "We thank the former President for the good work he did for Zimbabwe during the liberation struggle and as President for 37 years. We forgive him for any shortcomings during his long tenure of office" (ZCBC, cited in *Catholic Herald*, 27 November 2017, para.3).

While the Catholic Bishops did not want to be specific about the 'shortcomings' of Mugabe in their statement, as Pius Ncube had done, their use of the phrase 'we forgive' shows their conviction that Mugabe indeed had wronged the Church. Being men of the cloth, however, they took this as an opportunity to demonstrate to the world that we should not be bogged down by a person's shortcomings even if they do not come back to us to say sorry; what is paramount is to forgive 77 times as Jesus would put it (Mathew 18:22). In forgiving Mugabe, the Bishops not only demonstrated

obedience to the words of their Master, Jesus, but showed Zimbabweans the path to follow given that many still have unhealed wounds and memories from the terror of Mugabe's reign.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has demonstrated that despite Mugabe's claims of being a well brought-up Catholic adherent who benefited a lot from his Jesuit mentors, he was always a man of great controversy. While he had a traceable record of membership in the Catholic Church, the big zest for power in him, as Pius Ncube would put it (*Herald Scotland*, 2008), made him disregard the light the Church was trying to give him and went on to commit barbaric crimes against his fellow Zimbabwean citizens. When all was done and his reign had come to an end, the Church still had a heart to forgive him. The Roman Catholic Church provided a great lesson, especially in a country most of whose citizens are besieged by hurt and pain from a man who ruled them with an iron grip for 37 years.

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A Celebrated Coup that Appear Like Not a Coup? The Fall of Robert Mugabe in the Context of Zimbabwean and Regional Politics

James Hlongwana

Introduction

Zimbabwe's former strongman, Robert Mugabe, ruled the Southern African state for 37 years between 1980 and 2017. Mugabe, a man gifted with admirable oratory skills and intelligence, dwarfed continental and global leaders particularly due to his courage to confront world leaders at global forums. At home, using state and the party apparatus as well as exploiting populist policies, he managed to crush and silence all his critics. Extravagant flattery and bombastic praise became the means by which Mugabe could be approached and in arrogant fashion, his pleasure and that of the cabal around him, were the decisive factors in governance rather than the rule of law. Mugabe, together with his wife, Grace, occasionally told gatherings that there was no vacancy at the State House, a statement that was meant to frustrate those who harboured presidential ambitions. Indeed, Robert Mugabe had become the *de facto* life President of Zimbabwe. However, the last quarter of 2017 saw the unceremonial removal of Mugabe from power by the army with widespread domestic and international support, an institution he mistakenly thought was firmly under his control. While it was apparent at home and abroad that the army's intervention was unconstitutional, Zimbabweans from all walks of life celebrated Mugabe's downfall and continental and global powers neither condemned the army nor distanced themselves from Emmerson Mnangagwa, the man who succeeded Mugabe. Instead, the new government received congratulatory messages from all over the world, a clear signal that Mugabe was dead and buried.

This chapter examines the downfall of Mugabe in the context of Zimbabwean and regional power politics. In particular, the chapter analyses the contribution of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), the Zimbabwean Parliament and global players such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the ‘coup’ that culminated in the fall of Mugabe. Further, the chapter discusses the motivational reasons for the wild celebrations by Zimbabweans over the downfall of Mugabe. It is the contention of this chapter that while Mugabe’s resignation was precipitated by the intervention of the ZDF before the Zimbabwean Parliament had instituted impeachment proceedings against him, the greater part of the international community generally approved of the ‘coup’ since it had deposed a tyrant who had become a liability to Zimbabwe, Southern Africa and the world at large.

Zimbabwe Defence Forces intervention in Politics: A celebrated coup

In the morning of 15 November the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) launched Operation Restore Legacy, which put former President under house arrest and the army’s seizure of control of key strategic state institutions such as the Police, Central Intelligence Organisation, National Television and Radio Stations. Presumably, the operation targeted to restore normalcy in the country and ending socio-economic suffering (The Guardian, 2017). Effectively the military operation constituted a *coup d’état*. Various scholars define a coup as a sudden and violent overthrow of government usually by a small group of the military or army (Zimbabwe Independent, 24-30 November 2017). Conventional framework regards military coups to be anti-democratic and argues that all coups are carried out by ambitious military officers seeking to oust existing governments ostensibly to get into office and rule in perpetuity. In this regard, it can be argued that coups constitute an affront to stability, legitimacy and democracy (Varol, 2012). The term military *d’état*, French for “stroke of the state”, brings to mind coups that were undertaken through backdoor conspiracies by military officers in the case of

Africa in countries such as Libya (1969), Liberia (1980) Togo (1963) Uganda (1971) Zaire (1965), Ghana (1966, 1972) and Nigeria (1966, 1975, 1983) among others (Japhet, 1978). However, it can be noted that most army officers who got into office through *coup d'états* hardly brought structural changes to benefit the masses but turned out to be worse dictators than their predecessors. While the postulation that all military takeovers fit within this conventional anti-democratic theory pervades scholarly literature on military takeovers, some scholars claim that certain coups initiate political processes that culminate in the restoration of democracy and constitutionalism. In these situations, the military officers react to widespread opposition against autocratic administration and facilitate a transition for the conduct of fair and free elections within a short span of time (Varol, 2012). The Jerry Rawlings' led *coup-d'état* in Ghana for example, facilitated a transition from autocracy to democracy (Adedeji, 2001). However, the intervention by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) in politics which led to the resignation by Robert Mugabe from government appears to fit into the pro-democracy narrative because instead of engendering hostility, people from all walks of life warmed towards the military and Emmerson Mnangagwa who was given the mantle by ZANU-PF to rule Zimbabwe until a general election was conducted. President Robert Mugabe and his wife Grace experienced one of their most horrific moments when they woke up on November 15 morning only to find their luxurious Borrowdale mansion (also known as the Blue Roof) under siege from the military that had over the years helped maintain the long-time leader's iron grip. The presence of four tanks and a platoon of soldiers stationed outside his mansion was enough to signal to Zimbabwe's only leader since independence in 1980 that the end was nigh. He was reduced to a prisoner as his movements were now limited. The army was clearly in control after tanks took positions at strategic places at Blue Roof (Mpfu, 2017). However, world leaders and scholars alike had difficulties in characterising the November 15 events in Zimbabwe. The ZDF intervention was described by some as "soft coup" or "slow motion coup" while other observers simply remarked: "if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it

probably is a duck” (*Zimbabwe Independent*, November 24-30, 2017: 11). Therefore by extrapolation, if it was executed like a coup then probably it was a coup. This was a very peculiar kind of coup. Indeed, it looked like a coup but the army did not declare martial law, suspended the constitution [or jailed or executed the head of state and government] (Pigou 2017). However, the military argued that it was not a coup. It knew that most Zimbabweans and the world thought it was. So it had to be sanitised. According to the army, Operation Restore Legacy was not in fact a coup but just an intervention to retrieve Mugabe’s and Zanu PF’s legacies from the counter-revolutionaries who threatened to besmirch both (Fabricius, 2017). According to Sibusiwe Moyo, the then Chief of Staff and spokesperson for the military during Operation Restore Legacy, the security forces’ intervention had not effected a coup and would not harm Mugabe: We wish to assure the nation that His Excellency, the President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and his family are safe and sound and their security is guaranteed. We are only targeting criminals around him who are committing crimes... that are causing social and economic suffering in the country. As soon as we have accomplished our mission, we expect that the situation will return to normalcy (*Zimbabwe Independent*, November 17-23, 2017: 3).

It was only when that impeachment debate was already under way in parliament that Mugabe tendered his resignation, under Section 96 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Consequently the ‘coup’ was given a veneer of a constitutional change of power. Zuma then President of South Africa and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Security Organ Chairperson and Angolan President Joao Lourenço, who were due in Harare with a SADC mandate to assess the situation, cancelled their visit as there was nothing left to assess (Fabricius, 2017). It can thus be commented that Operation Restore Legacy left SADC looking even more helpless than before as a mere spectator to one of the most historical political events in the region in many years. Most Zimbabweans were happy that the two presidents were not coming; they felt that SADC had abandoned them to the mercies of Mugabe and ZANU-PF’s administration for many years and only showed concern when

Mugabe was toppled. Mnangagwa and the army generals had shrewdly shown SADC and the international community the smiling face of Operation Restore Legacy to avoid regional sanctions while showing the ruling ZANU-PF the hard reality that power had shifted from a Mugabe linked G40 cabal to the Lacoste faction headed by Mnangagwa. Robert Mugabe's removal from power was greeted with jubilation. In Harare, for example, there was dancing and singing, honks and cheers, and tears of joy. Many of those celebrating had known no other ruler, other than Mugabe. (The Guardian Paper, November, 21 2017). However, Mugabe insisted that the multitudes of people who marched in the streets of Harare on November 18 last years were opposition MDC-T supporters and therefore it was false to assume that their feelings represented those of all Zimbabweans (News day, November 24, 2017).

International Community's failure to intervene in the Zimbabwean crisis

Under normal circumstances, world leaders and even non-state actors could have voiced their displeasure over the ZDF's intervention in Zimbabwe politics. However, only lone voices of the losers in the Zimbabwean crisis were heard. Jonathan Moyo, for example, argued that the new administration in Zimbabwe was a product of a coup and that SADC and African Union (AU) erred in recognising it (*Daily News*, 2 February, 2018). Similarly, Lovemore Madhuku concurred with Moyo that the intervention by the army which culminated in the former President Mugabe's resignation was illegal in terms of the Zimbabwe's constitution (*Daily News*, 24 March 2018). At regional level, the Zambian government allegedly attempted to intervene to save Mugabe's regime (*Bulawayo* 24, 16 November 2017; *Lusaka Times*, 16 November 2017). Edgar Lungu of Zambia, for example, was quoted as saying "the illegal takeover of power in Zimbabwe by the military was not in tune with modern politics" (*Lusaka Times*, 16 November 2017). According to the *Zambian Observer* of 18 November, 2017, the Zimbabwean Army Commander warned Zambia against urging Mugabe not to step

down. However, the Zambian leader later abandoned Mugabe and sent the former President of Zambia Kenneth Kaunda to Harare to persuade Mugabe to step down (*Lusaka Times*, 20 November 2017). It can, thus, be argued that the change of mind by the Zambian leader was influenced by the international community which hardly sympathised with Mugabe. Robert Mugabe, also, responding to the AU delegation that was sent to assess the situation in Zimbabwe, argued that the army was unconstitutionally deployed as it was not deployed by the Commander-in-Chief and consequently, he argued that the new government was not properly constituted (Voice of America, February 25, 2018). Also, some opposition parties and political activists dragged the new government to court challenging its legitimacy after coming to power with the assistance of the army (Kamhunga, 2018). Responding to the court challenge, Judge President George Chiweshe ruled that the takeover of government by the army which culminated in Mugabe's resignation was justified considering that Mugabe could no longer execute his duties independently [on account of old age and poor health as well as his wife, Grace's growing influence] (*Daily News*, 24 March 2018). Moreover, Mugabe's resignation letter was used as a weapon to justify the ruling against the petition. The letter allowed Mugabe to leave office with some remaining dignity but also it allowed the group behind his downfall to present it as a constitutional transfer of power, rather than a change of government effected at gun point (*The Guardian*, November 22, 2017). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the military was helped, astonishingly, by none other than Mugabe himself. When the envoys of SADC met Mugabe and Chiwenga (the former Commander of Zimbabwe Defence Forces) a few hours after the army had seized power, Mugabe could have asked for help from the region. Surprisingly Mugabe told the envoys that there were no challenges in Zimbabwe (Fabricius, 2017). In spite of the fact that Mapisa-Nqakula and Bongo had come to Harare with SADC's rulebook in their back pockets which demands the suspension of any government that seizes power by unconstitutional means SADC was held back by Mugabe's bizarre response which probably sprung either from deep pride or incipient dementia (*Ibid*). Moreover, credit

should be given to Emmerson Mnangagwa who embarked on a charm diplomatic offensive, meeting various former liberation movements' leaders and former regional heads of states informing them of a potential civil crisis in Zimbabwe following his expulsion from government. Mnangagwa met various African National Congress (ANC) leaders in South Africa, former Tanzanian President, Jakwaya Kikwete, representatives from Botswana's ruling Botswana Democratic Party as well as representatives from Mozambique's *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) party where he briefed them of a looming crisis in Zimbabwe as a result of the unending succession wrangle (Mlambo, 2017). The result of his meetings with the regional representatives was that by and large the region was convinced that a solution had to be found in order to abate the crisis in Zimbabwe. This partly explains SADC's reluctance to act swiftly against the army in Zimbabwe. Ian Khama, the former President of Botswana instead of condemning the action by the army in Harare, wrote an open letter to Mugabe urging him to step down saying:

I am writing this open letter to you which I am aware is not the normal method of communication between leaders. Mr. President, I am writing to appeal to you to be sensitive to the wishes of the people... and to do the honourable thing by voluntarily relinquishing power as the President of Zimbabwe. My appeal is necessitated by an unprecedented situation currently unfolding in Zimbabwe whereby your party, Zanu PF, is calling for your immediate resignation and is in the process of instituting impeachment (Mlambo, 2017: 12).

Similarly, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) argued that the time had arrived for Mugabe to opt out in a dignified exit. It pointed out that it appreciated the circumstances under which the ZDF had intervened with sole intention of stabilising the situation which in their view threatened the national security of Zimbabwe (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 17-23 November, 2017). The PAC further warned against external interference as the atmosphere in Harare did not constitute any excuse to undergo what happened in Libya under

the regime of Colonel Gaddafi. Moreover, African leaders embarrassed by Mugabe had earlier encouraged him to step down before the army had begun moves to oust him. The regional 14 country SADC led by Zuma persuaded Mugabe to resign and even suggested offering him a senior African Union role to ease him out (*News day*, 24 November 2017). However, Mugabe in his usual arrogant fashion turned down SADC's proposal. The international community also supported the ouster of Mugabe with Mary Rose, Counsellor at the Embassy of Canada in Zimbabwe saying:

These developments represent a new chapter in the lives of the long suffering people of Zimbabwe. Their views have been made abundantly clear through peaceful demonstrations demanding change and we hope that with Mugabe's departure, the country's leaders will use this impetus to set Zimbabwe on a path towards greater prosperity (Mlambo, 2017:12).

Furthermore, the new government received congratulatory messages from other world powers such as United States of America, Britain, Russia, China and Germany (Chronicle, December 1, 2017). Much more interesting, even the Pope sent a message congratulating the new President in Zimbabwe (Murirwa, 2018). Clearly, Mugabe was isolated and effectively down and out with both the national and international support.

Zimbabweans' celebration of Mugabe's downfall

The discussion on Mugabe's disgraceful downfall cannot be complete without mentioning the contribution of his wife, Grace, who overplayed the political game in her manipulative pursuit to wrestle power in ZANU-PF and government. Grace showed how ruinous a first lady can be. She was arrogant, unloving and purveyor of hate speech. Zimbabweans and non-Zimbabweans alike loathed her public display of arrogance (Zaba, 2018). Masungure (cited by Laiton, 2017) contends that Grace pushed the military to the edge with her undiplomatic participation in politics and unrestrained

ambition. Grace appeared to be determined to succeed her husband but the push was bound to rub Mugabe's backers in the military. Resultantly, her undiplomatic conduct alienated people who had supported Mugabe for many years in ZANU-PF and government. Perhaps the mistake she made was to assume that firing Mnangagwa would stop the military generals from meddling in politics and that as Grace seemed to have an exaggerated view of the powers of SADC and AU regarding that they would not accept an unconstitutional change of government. It was also increasingly becoming clear that war veterans were relegated to the abyss while measures were implemented to prop up people with no liberation war credentials, for example, people like Jonathan Moyo (former Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education), Patrick Zhuwawo (former Minister of Public Service, Labour Social Welfare), Saviour Kasukuwere (Former ZANU-PF Political Commissar and Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and National Housing), Ignatius Chombo (former Minister of Finance), Kudzai Chipanga (ZANU-PF Secretary of Youth Affairs) and several others (Tafirenyika, 2017). To make matters worse, after firing Mnangagwa, Mugabe authorised full scale purge of all alleged supporters of Mnangagwa from the security sector, civil service, parastatals and government, arguing that they were sabotaging Mugabe administration to make it look bad (Reuters, November 27, 2017). It can thus, be concluded that some ZANU-PF members and military officers who felt insecure in a government that had been high-jacked by Grace Mugabe supported the removal of Mugabe by the army.

Linked to the above, was Mugabe's unwise decision to fire Joice Mujuru in 2014 under the direct influence of Grace (Mugabe, 2014). The expulsion of Mujuru created fissures in ZANU-PF and government as she had sympathisers and supporters of her own. This served to weaken ZANU-PF and the government, such that by the time Mnangagwa and the generals swooped, Mugabe had become vulnerable. Worse still, Mugabe's reliance on Mphoko, the second Vice President who lacked support from both ZANU-PF and army did nothing to save Mugabe. Clearly, Mugabe had surrounded

himself with lightweights by the time of his departure (Nemaramba, 2018).

Moreover, Mugabe was becoming a tribalist in the eyes of non-Zezuru Zimbabweans. The Ndebele, for reasons ranging from genocidal civil war in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in the 1980s, known as the *gukurahundi*, to high-jacking the liberation struggle from Joshua Nkomo and the apparent failure to undertake well-meaning developmental projects in Matabeleland, had resolved not to lend him support (Phimister, 2009). This partly explains the popularity of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and its leader, the late Morgan Tsvangirai in Matabeleland region (*Daily News*, 21 March 2013). The Manyika, especially the Ndau speaking people of south-eastern Zimbabwe, never forgave Mugabe for ill-treating Ndabaningi Sithole, the founding President of ZANU who initiated and supported the liberation struggle until Mugabe staged a palace coup against him in the 1970s (Jonson, 2001). Furthermore, Mugabe was so callous hearted that he did not bestow hero's status to a dead Ndabaningi Sithole who was his president and also jail mate during the liberation struggle (Tafirenyika, 2018). The Karanga were equally infuriated when a prominent politician from their region, Emmerson Mnangagwa, was fired from the post of Vice President to pave way for the ascendancy of Grace Mugabe to the Vice Presidency of the country. Against this background, Mugabe, in addition to increasing the number Zezuru in his government was planning to pass the baton of power to Sydney Sekeramayi (a Zezuru). Vice President, Mphoko who fought in the corner of Grace Mugabe in the succession matrix and supported Zezuru dominance in Zimbabwean politics remarked that, "What we hear is that President Mugabe is a Zezuru and if steps down a Karanga should take over, is not what we fought for. That is a Rhodesian mind. Don't lose sleep over statements by excitable people because there is nothing like that," (Mugabe, 2016: 1). To make matters worse, ZANU-PF party leadership that was present at the rally approved the singing of a song "Mazezuru Unconquerable" that celebrated Zezuru invincibility in Zimbabwe's politics (vp mphoko scoffs at karanga presidency,

<http://www.herald.co.zw/vp-mphoko-scoffs-at-karanga-presidency/>).

Also, it is important to note that nepotism had become a salient feature in Mugabe's government. Close relatives such as his sister (Sabina Mugabe), nephews (Leo Mugabe & Patrick Zhuwawo), son-in-law (Simba Chikore), cousins (the Matibiris), daughter (Bona) and several others had their presence in public and private sectors (Mashaya, 2016). Reacting to Mugabe's propensity to offer employment to relatives in government and parastatals, Douglas Mahiya, the former Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) cited by Mashaya (2016: 2) commented that "Mugabe employed his in-laws, many of his family members and relatives and close friends throughout all the sectors of the public offices, taking up senior parastatal positions." Zimbabwe had become Mugabe's personal possession to benefit relatives and fellow tribesmen. As it turned out, no one was prepared to defend Mugabe and the generals made the coup look like it was not a coup, rendering outside intervention pointless (Laiton, 2017).

Mugabe was also a victim of his economic and political policies which produced unintended consequences. One of these policies was the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), which in addition to ruining the country's commercial farming system, attracted international sanctions from Western countries (Cross, 2009). At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was the second biggest economy in Southern Africa after South Africa courtesy of sound economic policies and culture in the Rhodesian society (BBC News, 4 May 2017). Agriculture and industry contributed to the vibrant economy that Zimbabwe inherited from the Rhodesian government. However, currently, Zimbabwe has largely become an economic laggard in the region and the reasons are not far to configure. The FTLRP, *inter alia*, undermined agriculture as the mainstay of the Zimbabwean economy (Cross, 2009). In spite of the fact that on paper, the FTLRP was implemented to empower landless Zimbabweans and subsequently to act as a vital cog to drive economic development, the agrarian reform had far-reaching ramifications on the economy and society at large. The violent land reclamation method (or so-called farm

invasions) used by Mugabe's government to repossess land, spoiled a programme that could have transformed Zimbabwe into a show piece of stability, development and a beacon of hope for the people in the region and beyond. While Mugabe's government at home and abroad argued that the FTLRP was undertaken to correct historical imbalances in land ownership, in reality, the elite in government, ZANU-PF, security establishments and their connections awarded themselves large tracts of land and rich conservancies (Madzikanire, 2018). Mugabe and his close associates became multiple farm owners as a result of the FTLRP, which disrupted the country's agricultural system contributing to shortages that show no signs of ending, with government recently admitting land reform has been a disaster (Zhangazha, 2017).

Furthermore, the chaotic manner in which the FTLRP was implemented led to the frosty of relations between Zimbabwe and its long time Western allies who for many years had been Zimbabwe's trading partners and major sources of budget support. The violent farm seizures provoked negative response from Western countries. The United States of America (USA) together with her allies in the European Union imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe, under the Zimbabwe Democratic and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA) (Ankomah, 2007). Commenting on the sanctions, President George Bush (junior), then the President of the USA remarked that:

My administration shares... Congress deep concerns about the political and economic hardships visited upon Zimbabwe by that country's leadership. I hope the provisions of this important legislation will support the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle to effect peaceful democratic change, achieve economic growth and restore rule of law (Ankomah, 2007:3).

ZDERA barred the USA and multi-lateral institutions from extending financial support to Zimbabwe. While the USA and her allies argued that they were making a statement against gross human rights violations by imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe, the justification went deeper than that (Madzikanire, 2018). The author

posits that the violent manner in which the land reform programme was implemented characterised by intimidation, arbitrary land seizures, beatings and murder ruffled the Western powers because those that lost farms were whites. Its major weakness was that it violated the inviolability of private property (*Ibid*). The USA and her western partners were left with no option but to show solidarity with their kith and kin in the face of what appeared to be a war against the white farmers in Zimbabwe. At another level, it can be argued that Robert Mugabe's government had reneged on its constitutional obligation to protect its citizens against violence. While scholars and commentators argue that it was internal economic mismanagement which put the country's economy under siege (Kadire, 2017), I argue that sanctions had a greater impact in causing the economic mayhem. The devastating effects of the sanctions confirmed Mugabe's argument that the sanctions would hurt the entire country and that they would not even spare the MDC as an ally of the West. Predictably, the Western imposed sanctions triggered massive unemployment, wreaked havoc on infrastructure, ravaged the country's social services delivery in areas such as education, health, water and sanitation (Kanyekanye, 2011). The hyper-inflationary environment had far reaching consequences in the country's economy. Supermarkets were empty and there was no currency to talk about. The money economy had disappeared such that during the height of the crisis, workers in some tea estates in Chipinge region of Zimbabwe were paid in tea leaves (Zibuke, 2012). The desperate situation compelled the majority of the people to resort to cross border trade as a survival imperative. Consequently, the FTLRP inspired sanctions seriously undermined Mugabe's political base to the extent that when the army moved in to remove him, few were still willing to support him. Both blacks and whites poured into the streets of Harare to celebrate his ouster.

Furthermore, Robert Mugabe's controversial and ill-conceived policies such as indigenisation which required foreign firms to cede at least 51% shares to locals, have also resulted in de-industrialisation and lack of foreign direct investment, contributing to the high unemployment levels which independent economic analysts put at

90% (Zhangaza,2017). The policies resulted in widening socio-economic inequality, collapsing of social services, infrastructure decay and falling exports (Kanyekanye, 2011). Company closures and retrenchments indirectly promoted irresponsible vending where vendors were selling their wares everywhere in city centres of Zimbabwe turning the once sunshine cities into eyesores. While corruption gnawed the society's fabric and destroyed the economy and people's lives, Mugabe chose to turn a blind eye. Clearly, by November 15, 2017, Mugabe had become a liability to Zimbabwe.

Without shooting down the contribution of Grace Mugabe and poor economic policies to downfall of Mugabe, Zimbabweans were also happy to see the end of Mugabe's era of tyranny. In his endeavour to rule in perpetuity, Mugabe created a police state that violated people's fundamental rights (The Zimbabwean, August30, 2016). Several people lent into trouble for mere "careless talk", showing emotional attachment with the MDC and worse still participation in opposition politics. The police state became very visible after the arrival of the MDC on the political landscape in 1999 which challenged Mugabe and ZANU-PF's domination in politics and governance of the country (The Zimbabwean, 30 August, 2016). In an effort to justify the deployment of police, Central Intelligence Organisation's operatives, youth militia, army officers and party supporters, Mugabe claimed that Zimbabwe's territorial integrity was under threat from the MDC and its handlers from the Western world (Hartnack, 2006). However, it is important to note that the national security fall-back cushion was the same tactic that was employed by Hitler, Mussolini and other world tyrants to sustain their grip on power (*News Day*, 13 August 2016). Accordingly, state security apparatus and ZANU-PF's supporters targeted non-ZANU-PF members and civil society activists for abductions, arrest, torture, abuse and harassment to maintain high levels of intimidation and control across the country (Zimbabwe Human Rights Report, 2015). It can, therefore, be argued that the "wild" celebrations in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo and other cities, were spontaneous expression of joy over the demise of a dictatorial regime.

Conclusion

The chapter attempted to examine the underlying causes of Mugabe's fall from power in November 2017 after ruling Zimbabwe for 37 years. The discussion has shown that errors of commission and omission contributed to the dramatic fall of the once powerful man in Zimbabwe. Fundamentally, Mugabe's longevity in power estranged relations with his young but equally ambitious comrades in the liberation struggle and administration of Zimbabwe. Mugabe also introduced policies such as Economic Structural Programme in 1991, Land Reform Programme in 2000 and the Indigenisation policies which among other things contributed to di-industrialisation in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the policies especially the Land Reform Programme drove a wedge between Zimbabwe and international financiers who in addition to imposing sanctions, branded Zimbabwe as a dangerous investment destination. Consequently, hunger, starvation and unemployment forced Zimbabweans to pursue alternative survival strategies ranging from cross-border vending, prostitution, artisanal mineral mining to seeking employment in the region and far away corners of the world. To make matters worse for Mugabe, the arrival of Grace Mugabe on the political landscape ruffled ZANU-PF members and ordinary citizens because it became clear that Mugabe had surrendered power to his wife. In summation, the chapter argues that Zimbabweans and the international community welcomed military officers and Emmerson Mnangagwa because Mugabe's administration had caused social, economic and political problems not only for Zimbabweans, but the region and beyond.

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Whose Fault Was It Anyway? *Gukurahundi* (1982-87) and the Politics of Blame and Denial

Aaron Rwodzi

Introduction

The term *gukurahundi* is derived from a Shona language expression that means ‘the storm of the summer that sweeps away the chaff’ (Sithole and Makumbe 1997:133). In political terms, *gukurahundi* has a revolutionary goal of destroying the white settler regime, the internal settlement puppets,² the capitalist system and all other obstacles to Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) ascendancy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012).

Gukurahundi in post-independence Zimbabwean history remains a hotly contested and complex phenomenon involving heightened emotionality on the affected and afflicted sections of the people in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands. *Gukurahundi* is defined as: “a strategy of annihilating all those opposed to the chimurenga ideology³ and to ZANU-PF hegemony. As Ndlovu (2013) argues, ZANU-PF sought to inscribe a nationalist monologic history in Zimbabwe to prop up its claim to be the progenitor and guardian of the postcolonial nation. It is rooted in the exigencies of the armed struggle, in which violence was embraced as a legitimate tool of resolving political questions and issues” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012:7).

² These were African nationalist leaders such as Ndabaningi Sithole, Abel Muzorewa, Jeremiah Chirau and Chief Ndiweni who signed an internal settlement agreement with Ian Smith. The Patriotic Front comprising Joshua Nkomo’s and Robert Mugabe’s ZAPU and ZANU respectively brandished it as a sell-out agreement because it could not bring majority rule in Zimbabwe.

³ Chimurenga is a word that connotes the struggle against white oppression that started with the Ndebeles uprising in 1896. It was again used in the second revolutionary war and ZANU-PF is said to have appropriated the struggle for black emancipation by condemning other parties as sell-outs.

Callistus Ndlovu, a former ZANU-PF Politburo member from Bulawayo Province, commented that many people sought to cash in on the issue by mourning more than the bereaved and gave reference to a book *Holocaust Capitalism* written by a Jew which referred to individuals who went around the world conducting international meetings that castigated the Germans, yet they did not lose any relatives during Hitler's time (*The Chronicle*, 20 January 2018).

State-initiated atrocities in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands provinces which began in 1982 against alleged dissidents and their supporters of Ndebele affinity remain fresh in the memories of the afflicted and affected families. The view that persists in some circles is that the *gukurahundi* killings despite being horrific and regrettable, were a response to a complex array of existential threats to the state (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 11 August 2017). The government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe remained defensive and adopted a cautious domestic policy because of a multitude of foes [such as white Rhodesians and ZAPU] who remained strong after the Lancaster House Agreement (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 11 August 2017). The total cost for the *gukurahundi* damages is estimated at 68 million Zimbabwe dollars of the time (Chatham House 2007). The 'moment of madness' as Mugabe refers to the *gukurahundi* disturbances which saw about 20,000 deaths (Murambadoro 2015:37; CCJPZ 1997:34) at the hands of the Korean trained Fifth Brigade that was predominantly Shona-speaking, was viewed as ZANU-PF's attempt to exterminate the Ndebele people under the guise of bringing the dissident menace to an end. The debacle legitimised ZANU-PF's authority over Matabeleland and Midlands (Masilela and Rankin 2012) by giving Mugabe an excuse to dismiss Nkomo and other PF-ZAPU ministers from the Cabinet in 1982 (Bratton and Masunungure 2011).

The results of the 1984 Chihambakwe Commission set up by the Government of Zimbabwe to investigate the causes of the wholesale slaughter of ordinary citizens in these parts of the country were never disclosed despite legal attempts to have them published (Nyathi and Killander 2015). Human Rights groups such as the Zimbabwe Victims of Organised Violence Trust (ZIVOVIT) and *Ibhetsbu*

LikaZulu unavailingly lobbied government to release the findings of the Chihambakwe Commission (Ndou 2012). This further incensed surviving victims who wanted recourse to justice, objective redress and reconciliation. The Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration set up by the Inclusive Government in 2008 did not produce desired results. It was weakened by ethnic factors which proved too strong for national healing to take place. With Mugabe at the helm of the government, there was no state commitment to bring sanity and finality to the discourses surrounding this ethnicised conflict and admission of guilt remained an impossibility on the part of those with control over the instruments of force and coercion.

After the ‘military coup’ in November 2017, the new government led by former Vice President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, acknowledged that the grievances of the victims of *gukurahundi* needed to be addressed as evidenced by the seconding of Vice President Kembo Mohadi at the end of 2017 to lead the Ministry of National Healing and Reconciliation and spearhead the national healing campaign in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces (*uMmthwakazi Review*, 30 December 2017). This chapter acknowledges that so much has been said and written about *gukurahundi* and that much of the literature on this fiasco is lop-sided against ZANU-PF. On the other hand, ZANU-PF has repeatedly refused to overtly admit responsibility. The chapter, therefore, tries to interrogate the different narratives pertaining to *gukurahundi* atrocities and to put this phenomenon into its proper historical context.

The Government of National Unity (GNU) interregnum (2009-2013), the quasi-military regime ushered in by the November 2017 ‘coup’ and the ever-increasing number of calls for the redress of the unresolved legacies of the *gukurahundi* when ZAPU was reformed after the 2008 elections under its president Dumiso Dabengwa all attest the importance of dealing with the crisis once and for all as evidenced by the creation of a National Organ for National Healing.

The 2008 elections saw the website of the government-controlled newspaper, *The Herald*, with headlines ‘*Gukurahundi*’ after it was successfully hacked into and that gave rise to the formation of pressure groups from the affected regions and related websites

demanding formal apologies, justice and resolution (Fontein 2010). Mishal Husain, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interviewer in Davos, Switzerland, asked President Mnangagwa the *gukurahundi* question-if he was ready to apologise for it on behalf of the state (*Bulawayo*24, 2 February 2018). President Mnangagwa confirmed that he was State Security Minister at the time the massacres were committed. As proof of his government's commitment to resolving the political impasse, he put in place the National Peace and Reconciliation Act to allow the issue to be investigated so that the government and the nation at large would stand guided by it (*The Zimbabwe Mail*, 29 January 2018). This was, however, at the backdrop of the Chihambakwe Commission set up earlier in 1984 to investigate atrocities perpetrated on civilians and whose findings and recommendations were not brought to the public domain.

Most sources of information on *gukurahundi* were in the affected areas when the atrocities occurred. These include missionaries, journalists, lawyers, human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (LCHR), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), letters and reports and statements from the victims that were used by the government Commission of Inquiry in 1984, daily newspapers such as *The Chronicle* in Bulawayo as well as medical reports of victims seeking treatment. Evidence of massacres is also drawn from grave sites and mine shafts for example, Antelope mine in Matobo and Old Hat Mine in Silobela in Midlands where skeletons abound, as well as a mass graves near Cyrene Mission whose skeletons exhibit evidence of gunshots (LRF and CCJP 1997).

Historical background

This historical background is important as it problematizes the resolution of the *gukurahundi* crisis. There are multiple underlying causes of *gukurahundi* in Matabeleland and sections of the Midlands provinces. The deep-seated hostilities between ZAPU and ZANU during the formative years of the nationalist struggle of the 1960s

remained entrenched in the politics of Zimbabwe. Tekere (2004) notes that as ZANU youths in the 1960s, they made it practically difficult for Joshua Nkomo to be in Salisbury, now Harare, for more than an hour. That was after the young men in ZAPU, among them Robert Mugabe, Ndabaningi Sithole, Leopold Takawira, Edgar Tekere and Enos Nkala decided to break away from ZAPU to form ZANU in 1963 arguing that Nkomo still wanted to pursue constitutional negotiations with Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead when indications were that the latter would not create enabling conditions for majority rule.

Another area of disagreement was over the decision by the youths to consider the military option to oust the white minority regime. Nathan Shamuyarira in his book *Crisis in Southern Rhodesia* chronicles events leading to the 1963 split but denies that ethnicity was the basis of the split (Sithole 1980). Although Shamuyarira disputes the ethnic factor, the split of 1963 gave birth to a Shona dominated ZANU that concentrated its recruitment in Mashonaland (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008).

A testimony to the long-standing military hostilities between the two revolutionary wings was when in 1975 ZANLA guerrillas selectively murdered ZIPRA guerrillas at Mhorogoro and Mgagao camps (Chung 2015) after attempts had been made by the Frontline States and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)⁴ under the influence of presidents, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, respectively to have a single fighting force to liberate the country for fear that the two movements would not only weaken the liberation struggle, but also cause them to fight each other for power and dominance (Chung 2015). Janice McLaughlin supports this view that ZANLA and ZIPRA did not trust each other and intimates that it was ZANLA that breached the cease-fire agreement reached at Lancaster in 1979 by sending to the assembly points, guerrillas who only had three-months training, leaving experienced

⁴ The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) changed its name to the African Union (AU) in 2001

fighters out in military preparedness in case of resumption of war⁵. ZAPU firmly dissociated itself from the dissident menace and denied responsibility for the arms cache that were found on ZIPRA properties.

The Lancaster House Conference mediated by Lord Carrington in 1979 provided for a brief interregnum in which the British sent Lord Soames, the last British Governor of Rhodesia, to oversee the election campaign process and the overall political transition to black majority rule. Amnesty Ordinance 3 of 1979 and Amnesty (General Pardon) Ordinance 12 of 1980 were passed ostensibly to ensure that no prosecution could lawfully take place for any acts done either by members of government or security forces acting in opposition to government (CCJPZ 1997).

The General Amnesty Ordinance of 1980 pardoned all the belligerents of the conflict, and the Rhodesian perpetrators of gross human rights violations went unpunished (Bloomfield, Barnes, and Huyse 2003). This introduced the post-independence politics of forgetting the past so that those who committed serious crimes and human rights abuses in the liberation struggle in the 1970s would not be made answerable to their actions (CCJPZ 1997). The idea was to protect the white settler community from a vengeful Patriotic Front led by ZAPU and ZANU under Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, respectively, that had executed the armed struggle. That meant that Ian Smith could not be taken to court for the air raids and military incursions his Rhodesian operatives made into Mozambique, Zambia and Zambia in pursuit of what the whites termed 'terrorists'. The Nyadzonja massacres in which the body count of the dead was 1028 according to David Coltart (*The Zimbabwe Mail*, 29 January 2018) and the Chimoio massacre became closed chapters on this basis.

In line with this objective, and as part of efforts to fulfil the constitutional provisions of the Lancaster Agreement, the Prime Minister Robert Mugabe extended an olive branch in the form of a

⁵ Interview with Janice McLaughlin, Maryknoll Sister of St. Dominic, a congregation of women religious missionaries that was founded in the United States in 1912 and President of the congregation from 2009-2015, 23 October 2017.

reconciliation policy that curbed a precipitate flight of white skills and ensured continuity. However, the differences between Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe at Lancaster resulting in them campaigning as ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU in violation of the Lancaster decision for them to use the joint Patriotic Front brand, catalysed the tensions that built up soon after independence preceded by a ZANU-PF electoral victory.

Reconciliation efforts of this new government emphasised building a healthy relationship between the former repressive white regime and the nationalist movements, but were not extended to address the ethnic tensions within the black community (Mashingaidze 2010). Joshua Nkomo, who refused to take up the post of a titular president after the 1980 independence elections, later accepted the Home Affairs ministerial post, and this was interpreted by some ZANU-PF hardliners as a refusal to accept that ZANU-PF was the ruling party (Muchemwa, Ngwerume, and Hove 2013).

It is argued that the gross human rights violations now referred to as *gukurahundi* atrocities are covertly discussed in Zimbabwe because the perpetrators remain in power (Killander and Nyathi 2015). This view holds sway if consideration is given to the military coup in Zimbabwe in November 2017 that deposed the former president Robert Mugabe. Those who were directly involved in the wholesale extermination of the so-called dissident supporters throughout Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands provinces were elevated in the 'new political dispensation' led by Emmerson Mnangagwa. For example, after the November 2017 coup, the first commander of Five Brigade, Perence Shiri, became Minister of Agriculture: Emmerson Mnangagwa became the Zimbabwean President. Both were Mugabe's former lieutenants who acted under his instruction because he was the only person above them (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 March 2018).

During a rally in Victoria Falls, Mnangagwa likened ZAPU and the people of Matabeleland to cockroaches that could best be dealt with by applying DDT⁶ (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 March 2018). As

⁶ DDT stands for dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane. It is an insecticide first used for insect control in America but cancelled because of its environmental

Minister of State Security in charge of the CIO, Mnangagwa reiterated that the government could choose to burn down all villages infested with dissidents as a campaign whose success hinged on destroying the infrastructure that nurtured them (LRF and CCJPZ 1997:11). From this, it can be deduced that ‘infrastructure’ referred to civilians and all the support systems they rendered to the dissidents. Yet Mnangagwa wanted to be absolved from the saga claiming he was taking orders from above. Such statements were quoted verbatim in the press which makes it difficult for him to plead his innocence.

The term ‘dissidents’ was used by the government to depoliticise all defected ex-ZIPRA combatants (Murambadoro 2015:37). The term was synonymously used to refer to bandits and Super-ZAPU (Murambadoro 2015). The crackdown on dissidents in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands provinces orchestrated by government was indicative of the narrowness of the reconciliation policy in terms of its definition and goal, as it was taken to mean reconciliation between ZANU-PF and the Rhodesians to the exclusion of other political parties some of which were conceived in ethnic terms, like ZAPU.

As was the case with Matabeleland North, the kidnapping and subsequent murder of six tourists in 1983 by dissidents is said to have invited increased presence of government troops and compelled the government to re-introduce a law first used by the Rhodesian government in 1975 preventing the prosecution of anyone in the army (security forces) no matter the gravity of their offenses (LRF and CCJPZ 1997). This also laid the basis upon which to summarily detain real and supposed enemies of the state during the dissident era in the affected geographical regions of Zimbabwe.

Since the post-1945 Nuremburg Trials in Germany, documentary evidence has been ‘at the heart not only of legal cases against perpetrators of human rights abuse, but also of victims’ efforts to create an accurate historical record and thereby establishing the truth about the repressive past (Mashingaidze 2016). However, impunity

damage in 1972. It was used by soldiers in World War 11 to control malaria, typhus, body lice, and bubonic plague, National Pesticide Information Centre (NPIC) npic.orst.edu/factsheets/archive/ddttech.pdf [Accessed 19 May 2018].

and the culture of human rights violations in Zimbabwe were deeply embedded in colonial history and later transposed into the post-independence era under black tutelage. The Lancaster House negotiations chaired by Lord Carrington from Britain negated the issue of justice after the violence that characterised the revolutionary war in Rhodesia. It thus set a precedent that anyone could get away with crime.

In line with the issue of justice and human rights as stated above, the Rhodesian Prescription Act of 1975 stipulated that claims for damages in a clash situation or violent conflict could be made within three years of the alleged injury (Prescription Act, No.31 of 1975). Through the 1982 Emergency Powers (Security Forces Indemnity Act) as well as the General Amnesty (1988), it became impossible to make claims against an individual (LRF and CCJPZ 1997) for any alleged injury. Upon the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, the government in its report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights showed its commitment to making compensation available to all families with missing relatives regardless of whether there were court proceedings concerning the circumstances of the disappearance or not (LRF and CCJP 1997). In terms of the Zimbabwean law, it is difficult to incriminate perpetrators of politically-motivated atrocities, the reason being that criminal liability lapses 20 years after the commission of the offence (Killander and Nyathi 2015). This also means that at the time of writing this chapter, some 38 years after independence, and 31 years after the Unity Accord of 1987 was signed, criminal liability on perpetrators of the *gukurahundi* massacres lapsed many years ago.

Even after these sad developments, community efforts to commemorate, rehabilitate, exhume and rehabilitate *gukurahundi* victims in order to resolve the deep legacies of violence among the living and the dead are said to have been obstructed by ZANU-PF, just as ZAPU's war dead often remained uncommemorated (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000). Families and communities afflicted by the *gukurahundi* incessantly demand to know the burial sites of their relatives whose restless spirits they say continue to haunt them because of this unresolved violence (Eppel 2001). According to

Eppel in her chapter entitled '*Gukurahundi*: The need for truth and reparations', the greatest burden of guilt for atrocities in the 1980s lies with the Zimbabwe Government forces, the 5 Brigade or *Gukurahundi* Brigade that consisted almost entirely of ex-ZANLAs trained by North Koreans (Eppel 2004). This Brigade collaborated with the CIO and the Police Internal Security Intelligence (PISI) who oversaw the abduction and murder of scores of ZAPU and community leaders in 1985 leading to the surrender of 122 dissidents, a development that received wide media coverage (Eppel 2004). Important in Eppel's work is the admission that Five Brigade had people who were not Shona-speaking, although their numbers were comparatively lower. If those people were atrocious on their Ndebele-speaking people as soldiers under the employ of government, it waters down claims of tribal/ethnic conflict, or a crusade against the Ndebele as historians who are originally from Matabeleland would want to portend.⁷

CCJP statistics are the object of a great deal of controversy because they are lacking in reliability and often incongruent. For example, it is not possible to verify reports of army abuses and its reports were prepared at the height of atrocities making it difficult to name victims and informants in case evidence would be intercepted and jeopardize the victims further. This line of argument is predicated on the counter-accusation arising from failure to validate some atrocity cases. According to CCJPZ (1997: 21) the reports one hears in Bulawayo about atrocities committed by dissidents are often indistinguishable from the reports one hears in Bulawayo about atrocities committed by the security forces and that neither side acknowledges the legitimacy in the other's version of events.

More worrying and problematic are statistics by Killander *et al* (2015: 464) which suggest that 10,000 to 20,000 civilians were killed by state-sponsored agents between 1982 and 1988. A difference of 10,000 dead victims is difficult to reconcile. Arguably the 20,000

⁷ S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2006, p. 64) in ACCORD Occasional Paper 'The nativist revolution and development conundrums in Zimbabwe' uses highly emotional language to describe the killing of the Ndebele people and refers to Gukurahundi as a conflictual and violent nation-building and state consolidation efforts.

victims that many sources quote [such as unavailable official British and American government communications availed by 'Freedom of Information' (FOI), Hazel Cameron's twenty-page report published in the *International History Review*, human rights activists as well as declassified information from the United States diplomatic cable from that era] as the number of *gukurahundi* victims could be a cumulative figure for people killed by Super ZAPU, state operatives, ex-ZIPRA dissidents and disgruntled youths. On the other hand, the Chronicle reported 562 offenses committed between 1986 and 1988 involving dissidents and government officials from about 1,500 media reports extracted from it during that time, yet it was difficult to cross-reference the incidents it reported with other sources of data (CCJPZ 1997: 27).

The role of South Africa and government attempts to stabilize the country

The Apartheid government in South Africa at the time of the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 was hostile to the new black government under Prime Minister Robert Mugabe whom they regarded as a communist working with the Communist Party in South Africa to dismantle its racist system. The destruction of the at Inkomo Barracks in 1981, the attack on Mugabe's residence in 1982 (*The Patriot*, 19 March 2015), the destruction of ZANU-PF Headquarters in 1981 and the attack on Thornhill Airbase in Gweru in 1982 coordinated by ex-members of the Rhodesian Special Air Service under the employ of South Africa (CCJPZ 1997:41), all by South African agents, was blamed on ex-Rhodesians and ZAPU supporters (LRF and CCJPZ 1997). The South African administration was prepared to support organisations that could weaken Zimbabwe's economy in pursuit of its destabilisation policy already in force against the FRELIMO government led by President Samora Machel in Mozambique. Pieter Willem Botha introduced the 'total strategy' in the 1980s which was a twelve-point plan developed to counter the 'total onslaught' by internal resistance and international rejection to his racial government policies (Brits and

Grundlingh 1998). This strategy included state security and it gave the State Security Council (SSC) powers to carry out raiding neighbouring Frontline States such as Angola and Mozambique that were suspected of providing training camps for the African National Congress (ANC) guerrillas (Brits and Grundlingh 1998).

The Nationalist Party in South Africa capitalised on the old age animosity between ZAPU and ZANU so that the strained relations that back-dated to the era of the nationalist struggle of the 1960s worsened. The strategy involved engaging some members of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) to become double agents in spreading lies that elements within ZAPU, a traditional rival party that had lost to ZANU-PF in the United Nations supervised elections of 1980, were planning to overthrow the ruling party (LRF and CCJP 1997). Some of the buried weapons uncovered in 1982 and used as evidence against ZAPU are said to have been planted by these agents led by Matt Calloway who, as head of the Zimbabwe CIO branch, connived with South Africa (LRF and CCJPZ 1997) without ZAPU's knowledge. South Africa's military incursions in Zimbabwe put the Zimbabwe government in a state of permanent threat which became reason for it to maintain the Emergency Powers inherited at independence and whose primary motive was to stifle black nationalist politics after Ian Smith had declared white independence code named Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). This political atmosphere was sufficient and reasonable cause for the government to introduce curfew and deploy troops into the Matabeleland region. The CCJPZ (1997) asserts that in addition to inheriting a formidable array of repressive laws from the previous regime, Zimbabwe also inherited an army and CIO which retained some men well versed in the techniques of torture. According to Doran (2017) Prime Minister Robert Mugabe deliberately retained the Rhodesian Air Force with already known capabilities that it displayed during the guerrilla war so that he could use them in a war with ZIPRA.

Linked to the issue above was South Africa's 'Operation Drama' which was the code name given to undercover support it offered to a group of dissidents known as Super ZAPU trained in Northern

Transvaal and became active between 1983 and 1984 (LRF and CCJP 1997). Another perspective holds that responsible for this ‘Operation Drama’ were South African agents, Colonels Moeller and Jan Breytenbach who wanted to destabilize Zimbabwe by fuelling and politicizing ethnic divisions between ZANU-PF and ZAPU by sponsoring ZAPU defectors to carry out a civil war, hence the formation of Super ZAPU, comprising dissidents drawn from ZAPU refugee camps located in Botswana and then trained in four camps in Transvaal (Scott-Hopkins, 1984). This group of dissidents was however small, but its existence engendered ZANU-PF- ZAPU hostilities which made confrontation inevitable as suspicions, recriminations and counter-recriminations increased. This group of dissidents is said to have been separate from those former ZIPRA dissidents, yet it was by reason of its existence that the government launched a crushing attack on ZAPU to eliminate it as a political factor and create a one-party state (Kriger 2003).

ZIPRA guerrillas who turned into dissidents received a lot of military assistance from South Africa, which included 60 mm mortars, RPD machine guns and ammunition enough to carry a small war (*The Patriot*, 19 March 2015). The same strategy was used in Mozambique when South Africa created and financially sponsored Alfonso Dhlakama’s Mozambique Nationalist Resistance (RENAMO) to destabilize Mozambique after independence from Portugal in 1975. RENAMO used the ‘Gandira’, an organisation operating clandestinely to compel the peasantry in the countryside to adequately provide food and other needed equipment to RENAMO (Igreja and Richters 2008). It is estimated that by 1984, dissidents had murdered 120 innocent civilians, mutilated 25, raped 47 and committed 284 robberies in a manner that resembled Dhlakama’s RENAMO destabilisation activities (*The Patriot*, 19 March 2015). Important to note is the fact that these statistics vary considerably depending on the implicit agendas of the researchers of the *gukurahundi* fiasco and the sources that they consulted. Mpofu avers that disaffected former ZIPRA guerrillas became dissidents who infiltrated into Zimbabwe from South Africa in groups between 20-30 and those who received their training in Botswana were

repatriated once the Botswana authorities captured them (Mpofu 2012). This was the group of dissidents that was responsible for the horrific mutilations of people's lips, ears and noses in villages in the southern parts of Mwenenzi District as confirmed by government officials and newspapers (Mpofu 2012). However, Mpofu warns against some Machiavellian characters in history who are bent on dividing people along ethnic lines by flighting manufactured statistics of this genocidal conflict (*The Chronicle*, 27 January 2018).

Mugabe's dilemma after independence

ZIPRA and ZANLA combatants were put in adjacent camps in the western suburb of Entumbane in Bulawayo so that they could be integrated into one national army. The proximity of the two camps to each other triggered violent clashes in 1980-1981. The events became a dress rehearsal of the *gukurahundi* massacres. The Entumbane disturbances, or the Battle of Bulawayo resulted from the challenges the government had of integrating ZIPRA and ZANLA forces who fought each other in 1980 from their camps that were established close to each other. A similar military conflict ensued in Chitungwiza in Harare when the two liberation forces of ZANLA and ZIPRA were put into close camps where Zengeza Four location and Seke Teachers' College now stand respectively. The fighting in Entumbane was not confined to Bulawayo but spread to Ntabazinduna, Glenville and Connemara in the Midlands in 1981 allegedly due to an inflammatory speech by the then Minister of Home Affairs, Enos Nkala that referred to ZAPU as the enemy and ex-Rhodesian soldiers were called to quell the violence (CCJPZ March 1997).

The way the government stopped the fighting in Entumbane led to many defections in the ex-ZIPRA Camp. Some of them disappeared for ever without trace. There was dissatisfaction among ZIPRA members against favouritism given to ZANLA cadres in promotion, yet there was a ceiling on promotion for ex-ZIPRA fighters (Ngwenya and Harris 2015). Perpetrators of the massacre within the rank and file of the integrated national army, instead of

facing justice, were rewarded for their part in *gukurahundi* (Ngwenya & Harris 2015). The Dumbutshena Commission set up by the government to investigate the causes of the Entumbane debacle had its findings suppressed by the very same government that created it (CCJP 1997).

The bandits, as dissidents are simultaneously known, invited government action in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces after numerous reports of political instability, killings, robbery and damage to property perpetrated by them. At first the government deployed Four and Six Brigades, paratroopers, the CIO and Police Support Unit to crackdown on dissidents (LRF and CCJP 1997). The second attack was on ZAPU and its unarmed civilians in rural areas through the 5 Brigade, CIO, PISI and ZANU-PF youths because the government felt that the two conflicts, with dissidents on one hand and ZAPU and its supporters on the other were the same (LRF and CCJPZ 1997).

The first government attempts to eliminate dissidents has comparatively not received attention as has been the case with the latter when the government deployed the 5 Brigade to deal decisively with the civilians whom it blamed for supporting dissidents. It is alleged that the government failed to distinguish between dissidents and civilians so that by 1983, Mugabe sent troops in rural areas where people were thought to be feeding dissidents. He stated: “We don’t differentiate when we fight because we can’t tell who is a dissident and who is not”. (LRF and CCJP 1997). This thinking fed into the narrative of ZANU-PF and *gukurahundi* became a justificatory myth to annihilate PF-ZAPU and all possible enemies of the state.

Donald Treford, Editor of United Kingdom (UK) *The Observer* at that time, interviewed Prime Minister Robert Mugabe in 1984 for the country’s fourth anniversary of independence for a Current Affairs series on Channel 4 (*The Guardian*, 11 March 2000). Prime Minister Mugabe was asked whether he considered a political solution to the crisis in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces to which he responded: “The solution is a military one. Their [referring to ZAPU] grievances are unfounded. The verdict of the voters was cast in 1980. They should have accepted defeat then ... The situation

in Matabeleland is one that requires a change. The people must be reoriented' (*Sokwanele* report 29 May 2007). The *Sokwanele* report described the infamous red-bereted Five Brigade as soldiers equipped with unusually cruel skills and that the 'Breaking the Silence' report revealed that the methods used to address Mugabe's "reorientation", "change", "unfounded grievances" - methods designed to teach a community to "accept defeat" -included civilian murders, civilian rapes, civilian torture and the destruction of civilian property (*Sokwanele* Report, 2007). The CCJPZ report 'Breaking the Silence' also provided evidence of thousands of villagers who were starved, tortured and murdered by the North-Korean trained 5 Brigade in a campaign ostensibly designed to suppress Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU (*PaZimbabwe* , 4 February 2016). Mugabe blamed the CCJPZ report for castigating Five Brigade for the atrocities and for fomenting division and factionalism as to tear the whole nation apart (*Ibid*).

ZAPU, ZANU-PF's former partner in the liberation struggle, commanded political power, and residual military capability, within the Matabeleland region of the country, and amongst the large minority Ndebele ethnic group (Thomson and Jazdowska, 2012). Thomson and Jazdowska that ZANU-PF's fear of this power led to state resources being deployed to intimidate ZAPU politicians and members. This intimidation soon led to heightened political tension, generating rumours of rebellion which, in turn, resulted in a military crack-down.

In an interview the author held with Fay Chung, there was every reason for the ZANU-led government to become suspicious of ZAPU's intentions, given the fact that its military wing, ZIPRA, only fought and lost the Wankie battle against the Rhodesians in the 1960s and never made use of the weapons it received from sympathetic countries such as the Soviet Union, among others. It was suspected that ZIPRA had husbanded weapons for a future struggle for power with ZANU-PF and this was a high possibility supported by its conventional military dexterity. The ruling party deployed the Zimbabwean Army's Fifth Brigade to eliminate this opposition (Thomson and Jazdowska, 2012). Chung (2015) concurs and draws parallels between ZIPRA and ZANLA fighting forces by arguing that

the former was highly trained in conventional warfare whereas the latter had experience in Maoist guerrilla hit-and-run military strategy, a military strategy of the weak. The government imposed a media blackout on its operations in the two regions, deporting and declaring persona non grata journalists such as Peter Godwin who attempted to investigate and expose the *gukurahundi* atrocities (Mashingaidze 2016: 379).

Former President Mugabe laid the blame for the *gukurahundi* atrocities on ZAPU leadership under Joshua Nkomo, and ZIPRA, the party's military wing and the Ndebele people (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 March 2018). In the eyes of the Ndebele public, what was portrayed as a mission to stamp out dissidents became an anti-Ndebele campaign that deliberately conflated Joshua Nkomo, ZAPU, ex-ZIPRA and every Ndebele-speaking person into a dissident; a dissident collaborator; a dissident sympathiser and sponsor (Muzondidya and Ndlovu, 2007). For others, the violence and killings of the period, therefore, represented a 'Shona-crusade to make the Ndebele account for the nineteenth century raids on the Shona' (Muzondidya and Ndlovu, 2007). Mugabe suggested that about 12,000 men were trained as ZAPU dissidents for deployment, and this contradicts Dabengwa's statement that all ZIPRA-trained guerrillas went to assembly points from where some were voluntarily integrated into the ZNA whilst others who were educated and skilled reverted to their professions. Dabengwa argues that ZIPRA did not plan for an armed insurrection when huge arms caches were discovered but contends that it was the common practice by the two military wings, ZANLA and ZIPRA to have a cache that had arms next to every assembly point created during the cease-fire period preceding the 1980 elections because they did not trust each other (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 March 2018).

Mugabe's political dilemma after independence in 1980 resulted from a conversion of complexities and irreconcilable dynamics. First, he had to deal with a powerful ZAPU that was backed by a ZIPRA army adequately trained in conventional warfare. Chung (2015) exposes this probability and refers to the 'Zero hour' during which time ZIPRA would engage and test the ZANU-PF military machine

by mobilising its arsenals after independence in a fresh fight with the less experienced ZANLA force. ZAPU was a threat to ZANU-PF rule at the inception of independence. Secondly, Mugabe's relations with Joshua Nkomo were strained, fractious and violent, since the 1960s era of nationalist politics and right through to the Lancaster Agreement in 1979. The Frontline States compelled Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe to negotiate at the constitutional conference under the banner of the Patriotic Front. That was only as far as collaboration could go. Such fears by Mugabe and other members of the ruling ZANU-PF party sounded real. In this regard, there was need to deal with Nkomo's antipathy that the 1980 elections were stolen from him (Doran 2017). The situation was ideal for a military coup. Thirdly, Mugabe's government had to reckon with the Rhodesians soldiers who put up a spirited fight especially during the Lancaster negotiations in 1979. They still wielded a very strong security apparatus more fearful than ZIPRA (Chung 2015). Fourthly, the government had to deal with the South African apartheid military machine that backed Ian Smith's Rhodesia against African nationalists before the termination of the war in 1979. South Africa could not have a 'communist' Zimbabwe under Mugabe's tutelage in its midst. Destabilisation campaigns by South Africa against its so-called communist neighbours were already underway in Mozambique and Angola (Hanlon 1984).

Dabengwa describes how Mnangagwa came to Matabeleland on the same flight with Joshua Nkomo but did not tell him that his mission to that region was to investigate the alleged complicity of ZAPU in the weapons discovered in huge quantities (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 March 2018). He categorically stated: "I state again that the court records for the case [on arms caches] will show any interested person that we as ZIPRA commanders did not know anything about the caches and that is a fact." (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 March 2018). Dabengwa's argument is that the caches were a plot by the CIO and the police unit to incriminate ZAPU and that South Africa had special interest in the caches which were thought to belong to Umkhonto WeSizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC) responsible for creating a governance

crisis in Apartheid South Africa. Mugabe and his government desperately strove to weaken the dreaded military capacity of the ZIPRA army by engaging in the politics of provocation and humiliation to subdue Nkomo on a military level. Joshua Nkomo's humiliation came on Independence Day when Mugabe and foreign dignitaries enjoyed the centre stage where the former was a back bencher, hidden from a rapturous crowd (Doran 2017).

The dismissal of Nkomo from the post of Minister of Home Affairs in 1981 in a Cabinet reshuffle was also a sufficient act of provocation. The action compelled senior ZIPRA members to be ready for any eventuality, including moving back to a neighbouring state (Doran 2017). Doran further noted that by implication, ZIPRA members intended to re-open a rear base in Zambia, their traditional supporter, and describes how Mugabe, for fear of a renewed solidarity between ZAPU and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, quickly moved in to prevent a rear base from being established after persuading Kaunda to distance himself from Nkomo.

The link between ZAPU and dissidents was difficult to discount from the perspective of Mugabe and ZANU-PF. The rising number of dissidents posed a serious security problem requiring swift military intervention and response to deal effectively with the conflict (CCJPZ 1997). It is intimated that there was a group of ZIPRA guerrillas in Nkayi and Gokwe districts operating under 'Tommy' who was renowned for refusing to carry out ZIPRA orders from its High Command structure in the 1970s (CCJPZ 1997). This group is argued to have acted unilaterally outside the ZAPU command structures and therefore not answerable to any authority. Another group of former ZIPRA guerrillas in Tsholotsho that also refused to enter assembly points and, thus rejected the ceasefire agreement that terminated the war in Rhodesia (CCJPZ 1997) was not under ZAPU instruction to partake in atrocities that imported a campaign of terror into Tsholotsho.

The lack of transparency on the military wings of ZIPRA and ZANLA on aspects of bringing all liberation fighters into assembly points and on demobilisation after the war was conducive for political polarisation after independence. This was coupled with

government's fear of the former Rhodesians whose soldiers, apart from having to be integrated into a single national army, did not subscribe to the new political order that threatened the privileged economic position of the white settler community.

Dabengwa, in his interview with *Zimbabwe Independent* correspondent Nkululeko Sibanda, laments the allegations that Mugabe made against Joshua Nkomo after his death in 1999 as having fomented the dissident crisis and argues that Mugabe at Nkomo's funeral apologetically described the state's deployment of Five Brigade in the Matabeleland and Midlands regions as 'a moment of madness' (Rwafa, 2012) in vacillating style. According to Rwafa (2012), that was the only time an official 'voice' came close to apologising for the *gukurahundi* operation yet it is vague on whether it was the soldiers' or Mugabe's madness that made the conflict inevitable.

Ndlovu (2010) argues that while Mugabe's statement acknowledges the occurrence of *gukurahundi*, it insinuates that the atrocities were temporary and internal to the soldiers on the ground who committed the crimes without state permission which may mean that what occurred was a consequence of army soldiers who did not follow orders (Ndlovu 2010). This denial by Mugabe is immersed in the lack of clarity of his statement made at the burial of Joshua Nkomo in 1999, and it is felt that it came too late when relations could not be permanently mended unless it was voiced immediately after the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU. In any case, "*gukurahundi* broke ZAPU as a political force; a fact confirmed when the rump of the party took the humiliating decision to 'merge' with ZANU-PF in 1987" (Thomson and Jazdowska 2012: 79).

According to the Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa (CPIA) (2005), the Unity Accord was elitist and it failed to deal with the effects of the *gukurahundi* era especially at grassroots level (Makwerere and Dube 2012). In a conversation with Cephass Msipa, one of the few remaining ZAPU ministers of what had been a Government of National Unity, Sekeramayi, said that "not only was Mugabe fully aware of what was going on and what the Fifth Brigade was doing

was under Mugabe's explicit orders". Eddison Zvobgo, a member of ZANU's 20-member policy-making body, spoke of a "decision of the central committee that there had to be a 'massacre' of Ndebeles" and that statement squared precisely with Fifth Brigade's ethnocentric *modus operandi* (*Mail Guardian*, 18 May 2015).

The roles of parties to the crisis

The *gukurahundi* crisis involved a combination of the following: Ex-ZIPRA guerrillas, Ex-ZANLA guerrillas, Ndebele dissidents, Super-ZAPU, Five Brigade, ZAPU and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) of the government of Zimbabwe. Ex-ZIPRA guerrillas who became dissidents deserted the Zimbabwe National Army and took to the bush again on allegations of ethnic persecutions that targeted them within the army (LRF and CCJP 1997). Two treason trials, one in 1982 against Dumiso Dabengwa, Lookout Masuku and four others, and another one in 1986 against Sydney Malunga, failed to confirm ZAPU's complicity in the dissident menace (LRF and CCJP 1997), but they were nonetheless detained for four years without trial.

Mugabe accused ZAPU of sending trains from Zambia laden with weapons of war for which Kenneth Kaunda, the then Zambia President, apologised. Dabengwa admits that these weapons were offloaded from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and that they had been given to them as a gift from the Soviet Union that they could not reject but as ZAPU, they had plans to surrender all these weapons to the new Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). However, small weapons were taken to Gwayi and big tanks were transported to Esigodini where they would be kept under the supervision of former Rhodesians (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 March 2018). Any government, as that of ZANU-PF did, could have sufficient reason to suspect an armed insurrection given the political and military volatility that engulfed the early post-liberation era in Zimbabwe. The account by Dabengwa, the former Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) intelligence Supremo, lacked credibility especially when the

issue of arms cache was suggestive of a planned revolt by ZIPRA guerrillas.

With all ZAPU leaders in detention and facing charges of treason, ZIPRA cadres opted to stay alive by deserting the army (LRF and CCJP 1997). These were suspicious of the South African-backed Super ZAPU dissidents. The youths from Matabeleland who were persecuted by Five Brigade and were vengeful became dissidents with no link to ex-ZIPRA guerrillas. Pseudo-dissidents, according to the LRF and CCJP (1997) report, were ZANU-PF's hit squad that was beholden to politicians in government and it was responsible for the death of sixteen missionaries in Matobo in 1987. This diversity in the dissident community-ex-ZIPRA cadres, persecuted youths, Super-ZAPU, ZANU-PF pseudo dissidents-were responsible for the mayhem in the countryside involving the murder of 33 white commercial farmers and civilians classified as sell-outs, robberies on buses and stores and rape (LRF and CCJPZ 1997).

In Tsholotsho, Lupane and Nkayi, within a space of six weeks, some 2,000 civilians had died, hundreds of homesteads had been burnt and thousands of civilians had been beaten. 'Most of the dead were killed in public executions involving between one and twelve people at a time' (*Sokwanele* report 2010). While the "dissidents" of Matabeleland can be blamed for some of the atrocities, all evidence points to government forces, Five Brigade and the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) being responsible for over 90% of violations (Eppel 2008). Robert Mugabe, then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe is quoted by Crimes against Humanity Zimbabwe (2010) to have said that Fifth Brigade was primarily formed to 'combat malcontents'. The understanding was that the word 'malcontents' was used to refer to 'dissidents', but as the events in Matabeleland and Midlands unfolded, 'malcontents' was translated to mean the ordinary Ndebele people who were thought to be supporters of ZAPU (Rwafa, 2012).

Five Brigade is generally blamed for the death of 20 000 civilians during the campaign of terror orchestrated and directed by the ruling ZANU-PF government against its minority rival ZAPU (Fontein 2010. Dumisani Ngwenya used the log that he was beaten with by

the 5 Brigade during the *gukurahundi* atrocities as cover design for his book (Ngwenya and Harris 2015). Other techniques of Five Brigade cruelty were the ‘submarine’ and ‘falanga’ (Fontein 2010). The former involved deeping the victim’s head in water whilst his body was held upside down to the point of suffocation, whereas the latter involved beating the victim under the feet until they swell to the point that one could not move at all. Other forms of CIO abuse included electric shock, sexual torture where women were either raped or sticks were forced into their genitalia and tying men’s genitals to rubber and beating them in front of their loved and respected ones to destroy the morale of the entire communities (LRF and CCJP 1997).

The Patriot, a ZANU-PF-funded newspaper, bemoans the demonisation of the 5 Brigade, arguing that this army was made up of both ZIPRA and ZANLA who were incorporated into the ZNA (The Patriot, 19 March 2015). From this perspective, it becomes probabilistic to apportion the blame to ZANLA alone. In any case, it would have been unrealistic and incredulous to have 5 Brigade wholly Shona-speaking, which could render the mass killings the description of an attempt to wipe away the Ndebele. It also becomes prudent for ZAPU not to celebrate its tribal innocence to the debacle as Geoffrey Nyarota’s analysis as editor of *The Chronicle* (1982-1984) views *gukurahundi* not as an assault on the Ndebele, but as a military action by Mugabe’s regime to consolidate its power (Thompson 2007) and create a one-party state (LRF and CCJP 1997). The CCJP and LRF sent a copy to president Mugabe and his Cabinet ministers of their findings on the impact of government troops, dissidents and the youth brigades on the lives of the traumatised people (LRF and CCJP 1997), but the then Defence Minister Sydney Sekeramayi brandished the reported atrocities as malicious and a few weeks later, Mugabe denied them and accused his critics of being a band of ‘Jeremiahs’ (LRF and CCJP 1997).

It is on record that Five Brigade was deployed to the Matabeleland and Midlands regions in 1983. In Matabeleland and Midlands provinces, Five Brigade adopted a strategy like Operation Turkey, the one used by Rhodesian army during the liberation war that sought to deprive guerrillas of food supplies by destroying crops

in rural areas (CCJPZ 1997). In late 1984, 5 Brigade was withdrawn for intensive retraining and they were better behaved because of fewer complaints against them when they were later redeployed in 1984 (LRF and CCJPZ 1997). Lieutenant Colonel Dyke, commander of Paratroopers between 1983 and 1984, supports the campaign by the Five Brigade against civilians as a strategy that brought peace quickly to the region, but the argument loses weight because according to CCJPZ report, there were more murders by dissidents after 5 Brigade was withdrawn than before (LRF and CCJPZ 1997). The British government considered the *gukurahundi* as an inevitable political dynamic and hoped that sooner rather than later the affected regions would return to normalcy.

According to Cameron (2018), Margret Thatcher's wilful blindness to the state-sponsored Matabeleland massacres constituted naked realpolitik. Cameron also postulates that the British government distanced itself from the escalating atrocities as long as they did not target the white population. In support of this line of argument, Cameron analyses reports by the British high commission to Zimbabwe at the height of the *gukurahundi* campaign, Robin Byatt to cover up the atrocities to the Thatcher government as one of the measures to prevent the possibility of 'a major exodus' of Zimbabweans to the UK (Cameron 2018). The British Conservative Government under Margret Thatcher feared to jeopardize their symbiotic relations with Robert Mugabe whom they could not dare oppose too soon after independence. Joshua Nkomo fled to London when members of Five Brigade killed three people who stayed with him in the city of Bulawayo (Zimditvnews online) [Accessed 15 March 2018]. In an interview with a British correspondent, Nkomo held the view that *gukurahundi* was not a tribal war and that it would be a mistake for anyone to regard it as such: rather it was a political issue (*Zimditvnews, online, n.d.*).

Former Vice-President Phelekezela Mphoko, announced to the press in February 2015 that *Gukurahundi* was a plot of the Western bloc to destabilise the country (*Sunday News*, 2015). The government of Robert Mugabe continued to shift blame for the massacres on Britain and America who, it alleged, were buying time to detract

Mugabe from addressing the land question (Murambadoro 2015). Gutu criticises the Mugabe regime for double standards. He argues that if the colonial Prime Minister Ian Smith is to blame for the Rhodesian raids into Mozambique and Zambia where thousands of trainee guerrillas were bombed, the Zimbabwe government should also admit its own atrocities in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands province so that national healing can prevail (Benyera 2014).

Conclusion

The politics of blame and denialism with reference to conflicts in the Matabeleland and the Midlands regions from 1982 up to 1987 are as fresh today in the minds of victims of the cruelty as they were when the offences were committed. Apportioning the blame to Five Brigade that was state-sponsored somehow ignores the fact that there were other players who contributed to the mass killings that characterised the region during the period.

There were loose associations of ex-ZIPRA guerrillas who became dissidents and were responsible for murder, assault, mutilation and destruction of property. ZAPU had no control over these renegades. There were ex-Rhodesians who collaborated with South Africa to undermine the newly attained political independence in Zimbabwe. They still were bent on acts of sabotage to destabilise the country in the same way South Africa was doing to Mozambique and Angola, exploiting the deep-seated traditional hostilities between ZANU-PF and ZAPU with the hope of politicising ethnicity in areas affected by *gukurahundi*. Some of these operatives had been drafted into the ZNA and acted beyond bounds in a bid to discredit the 5 Brigade by making it solely liable for accountability.

The South African Apartheid regime sponsored a clandestine Super ZAPU that terrorised the greater part of Matabeleland South, equipping it with the most brutal forms of torture and murder resulting in the killing of people indiscriminately and creating despondency amongst eye-witnesses.

It must be noted that meaningful economic development hardly takes place in the absence of true democracy. Human rights ought to be respected as these are the foundational basis for good governance and political stability. Although historians and Human Rights groups with interest in *gukurahundi* generally concur that a repetition of the same crimes against humanity should be avoided at all costs, there is still evidence in abundance that the afflicted families and concerned Ndebeles want the truth of what happened to be told. It is felt that only truth and justice, and a formal apology or apologies as acknowledgement for what happened in the past can bring people together and thwart the potential ethnic divisions that threaten to tear Zimbabwe into pieces. This chapter, based on corroborated evidence from the sources consulted, concludes that the Gukurahundi fiasco was a shared responsibility involving so many stakeholders, some of which cannot be held to account because they ceased to exist soon after the Unity Accord of 1987. However, what is important would be to ensure that all people directly or indirectly linked to events in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces be removed from positions of power because they are likely to be involved in similar violations of human rights in future should they fail to achieve their political objectives by constitutional means.

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A Philanthropist amid Land Grabbing? Grace Mugabe Empire Expansion and the Forced Eviction of Villagers in Mazowe

Nancy Mazuru

Introduction

This chapter examines Grace Mugabe's business empire expansion in the Mazowe area of Zimbabwe, which caused the violent eviction of villagers from Manzou Farm. The chapter particularly pays attention to the manner in which the villagers' rights were violated through their forced displacement and subsequent lack of compensation. Attention is made on how Grace misused her powers as the wife of the then Zimbabwe's long standing ruler, Robert Mugabe, by abusing the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) to forcibly evict the villagers to pave way for her business expansion in the area despite the High Court's ruling that the forced evictions were illegal and therefore null and void and had to be stopped. During the reign of her husband, Grace was hailed as a philanthropist and caring mother of the nation, largely because she owned an orphanage home in Mazowe (*Sunday Mail*, 23 July 2017; *Herald*, 30 August 2017).

That said, the chapter interrogates how the former first lady's eviction of villagers contradicted her "philanthropic work" of helping the orphans and her role as the then mother of the nation. Since houses were burnt down and families were left without shelter, exposing children and elders to the vagaries of the violent weather and even creating more orphans, one would wonder how a philanthropist who assisted orphans created conditions that made children and families susceptible to poverty and personal insecurity.

Further, the chapter analyses how the forced displacements controvert Grace's expected duties as "mother of the nation", especially considering the fact that mothers are generally perceived as

people who have great concern for the wellbeing of children in particular and families in general.

The land dispute in Zimbabwe

The land issue in Zimbabwe has always been marred with power imbalances and various forms of social injustices with those without power always finding themselves on the losing end. These discrepancies in land tenure can be traced back to the colonial times beginning from 1890. During the colonial era, the appropriation of land by European settlers in Zimbabwe as in many other African countries guaranteed white economic dominance and impoverishment of the native people (Herbst and Herbst, 1990). In Zimbabwe, several land grabbing Acts such as the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, the 1951 Land Husbandry Act, and the 1969 Land Tenure Act were all passed to promote racial segregation in Land allocation (Williams and Hackland, 2015) in favour of the settlers. Although there were many land legislations, the Land Apportionment Act and the Land Husbandry Act generated the most outstanding grievances of the indigenous people (Sibanda, 2005). The Land Apportionment Act divided land into two parts, one for the indigenous people and the other for the white settlers (*Ibid*). The land division was done in such a way that the 1.1 million native people (who were the majority) were restricted to the hottest and most unproductive low rainfall areas with the 500 000 white minority population taking over all the fertile, productive high rainfall areas (Benyera, 2017). Some of the areas in which the native people were settled were infested by tsetse flies and Malaria (Sibanda, 2005). Thus, the Africans were settled in adverse geographical areas which were not conducive for agriculture and habitation. Consequently, due to the large concentrations of people in the so-called Tribal Trust Lands, there was rapid land degradation (Mafa and Gudhlanga, 2015). However, to the European settlers, the land degradation was seen as emanating from poor agricultural practices as well as poor land management and not overpopulation in the Tribal Trust Lands per se (*Ibid*). This negative perception which had hidden agendas saw

European settlers passing the Land Husbandry Act in 1951 which limited the number of livestock as well as acreage for crop cultivation per household (Matambirofa, 2017), thereby further exacerbating land shortages among the indigenous people. Therefore land appropriation was the greatest concern of the native people throughout the colonial era. As such, land was the central issue during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle (Herbst and Herbst, 1990). Hence, the problem of land ownership imbalances has a long pedigree.

The land dispute in Zimbabwe, however, did not end with the country's attainment of independence. Even in the post-independence era, land continued to be the most important domestic issue (*Ibid*). The first two decades of Zimbabwe's post-independence era saw the continued skewed distribution of land in favour of the whites as the willing-seller, willing-buyer agreement failed to give the indigenous people the opportunity to acquire land (Mafa and Gudhlanga, 2015). One of the major reasons why the willing-seller, willing-buyer failed to meet the intended goals was that the amount, quality, location and cost of land were determined by the land holders and their own interest, and this led to little and poor quality land being made available for redistribution to the Zimbabwean majority (*Ibid*). Generally, the European farmers were not willing to sell their commercial land and this entailed that the racial land possession discrepancies were not addressed. The continued inequitable land distribution in the post-independence era saw the Zimbabwean government embarking on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in 2000 in an attempt to redress once and for all the landholding disproportions (Jones, 2014). The FTLRP entailed the seizure of commercial farms owned by the white minority and their redistribution to the indigenous majority (Jones, 2014). However, the FTLRP attracted a lot of criticisms from human rights activists due to the brutal manner in which it was conducted. The programme was characterised by violence, chaos, and sometimes kidnapping and killing of white farmers (Tofa, 2012). In addition to the violent manner in which it was carried out, the FTRLRP generated a lot of controversy about the extent to which it was meant to benefit the

general populace. This was largely because very few ordinary people managed to get land as the programme was characterised to its partisan nature and by multiple ownerships of land by high ranking political figures (Tofa, 2012), including Robert Mugabe and his family. Given this scenario, the inequalities in land ownership persisted in Zimbabwe even after the FTLRP. Productive land still remained in the hands of a few people who had the political muscles and connections during Mugabe's rule. Even some of the indigenous people who benefited land from the FTRLRP were losing out their land to the ZANU-PF bigwigs as demonstrated by the eviction of villagers from Manzou Farm by Grace Mugabe. This, therefore, validates Purvis and Smith's (2004) assertion that at national level, the maldistribution of basic resources such as land and water within the farming populations is a reflection of equally distorted distribution of political power in many parts of the Global South. Thus, limited access to land occupation for many is deeply embedded in limited political powers.

The eviction of Manzou Villagers and other post-colonial evictions in Zimbabwe

Before looking at what transpired during the eviction of Manzou villagers, it is important to situate these forced displacements within a historical context. Although some of these forced displacements were not directly linked to the issue of land, they help to unveil the trajectory of human rights abuses that characterised the rule of Robert Mugabe through direct and indirect forced dislodgments and nepotism. Prior to the eviction of villagers in Manzou Farm, several evictions had taken place across the country, graced by Robert Mugabe. The earliest forced evictions incurred by Zimbabwean citizens during the reign of Robert Mugabe can be traced back to the *Gukurahundi* massacres which took place in the early 1980s. *Gukurahundi* was a militarised government action unleashed by the Fifth Brigade as a counter move to deal with the problem of dissidents, mainly among the Ndebele people in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces (Sibanda, 2017) of Zimbabwe. This operation

caused the death of thousands of people and forced some victims to flee to the City of Bulawayo (Mpofu, 2012) and beyond as refugees. Another episode of forced evictions was the 1993 displacement of 4000 villagers by the ZANU-PF government from Churu Farm, located on the outskirts of Harare (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 4 February 2010). The Churu farm was Ndabaningi Sithole's private estate and he had settled these people on it after they had been evicted from illegal settlements in Harare and left homeless (*Ibid*). Sithole was one of the founding members of the ZANU PF party in conjunction with Herbert Chitepo, Robert Mugabe and Edgar Tekere in 1963, but he later on formed his ZANU-Ndonga party (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Due to political tension between Sithole and Mugabe's regime, the move of resettling the landless people on his private farm did not go well with the ZANU PF government as it exposed the party's incompetency and lack of respect for human rights (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 4 February 2010). As such, the government first accused Sithole of not owning the farm albeit the fact that he had legally bought it prior to the settlement of the people (*Ibid*). Through the then Health minister Timothy Stamps, the government declared Churu farm a health hazard that would pollute Lake Chivero (*Ibid*). Despite obtaining a High Court injunction that clearly stated that the Land Acquisition Act was being used as a punitive measure and political weapon, the ZANU PF government went ahead and forcibly removed the landless residents from Sithole's Churu farm and there were no provisions for their alternative resettlement (*The Zimbabwe Situation*, 3 February 2010). The Churu farm evictions reveal the violent mechanisms used by the ZANU PF government to suppress opponents or gain political mileage. The eviction of villagers from this farm took place despite the High Court's ruling that the evictions were unlawful, causing most of the victims to be homeless and landless (*The Zimbabwe Situation*, 3 February 2010). In a much related experience, during the first decade of the new millennium, the ZANU-PF government unleashed political violence on MDC party members, a scenario which forcibly displaced most of the MDC activists and supporters from their homes (Kasambala, 2005). This political violence reached its apex between April and June 2008 when

at least 30 000 persons were displaced in the wake of government-sponsored political violence, particularly in rural areas (U.S Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2009). Still in the same decade, the other two episodes of forced evictions induced by the then Mugabe's government include the eviction European farmers from their land as already highlighted, as well as Operation *Murambatsvina* (clear the filth), which took place in May 2005 with the intention of cleaning up the cities through destruction of illegal structures (Tibaijuka, 2005). Operation *Murambatsvina* destroyed homes, business premises and vending sites and an estimated 700 000 people in cities across the country lost their homes and their sources of livelihood (Ibid). In addition to the above evictions, the 2014 Tokwe-Mukosi Dam flood displacements were another event which despite being labelled as a natural disaster by ZANU- PF officials was perceived by the general public as a convenient ploy by the Mugabe regime to evict the villagers without compensation (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Hence, these evictions clearly epitomise the historical trajectory of forced evictions in the post-colonial Zimbabwe. As such, the Manzou Farm evictions should not be perceived as a unique phenomenon but a continuation of the trend of forced evictions which was a pervasive practice during the Robert Mugabe's era.

The evictions of Manzou villagers to pave the way for Grace's take over began in 2015. In January 2015, ZRP officers arrived at Manzou Farm armed with guns and baton sticks and without producing any court order, they ordered residents to leave the farm with immediate effect (Mushava, 2015). In 2017, the police conducted a series of eviction of the villagers from the same farm. (Mananavire, 2017). The evictions took place despite the existence of two court orders issued by the High court of Zimbabwe in January 2015 and March 2017 barring the then Home Affairs Minister, Ignatius Chombo, Police Commissioner-General, Augustine Chihuri and Lands Minister, Douglas Mombeshora, together with their officials from assisting in the displacement of the Mazowe villagers (Kamhungira, 2017). The Police forced the villagers into the ZRP trucks and dumped them in the open, without food and water some 35-40 kilometres on the roadside along the Mvurwi road (*Ibid*). In

instances where the villagers were not at home, the police allegedly stormed into the villagers' houses and threw out their property before pulling down the structures (Mushava, 2015). These forced displacements thus disappointed the villagers not only because of the violent manner in which they were conducted but also because the evictees had been staying on this land as far back as 2000 after being authorised by the government under the FTLRP (*The Herald* of 13 January 2015).

However, in justifying the forced eviction of these villagers, many ZANU-PF officials defended the move, which they argued was a necessary exercise. For example, the then Minister of State for Mashonaland Central Provincial Affairs, Martin Dinha, stated that the area was not for human habitation but a national heritage site (Share, 2015). He avowed that Manzou Farm was a game park and that the department of National Museums and Monuments had declared it a national heritage site years ago (Share, 2015). Dinha further stated that the evictions were merely a provincial exercise dealing with squatters as well as the protection of national heritages and that it had nothing to do with Grace Mugabe and her family (Share, 2015). In further defending the evictions, Dinha stated that Manzou Farm was a national heritage because that is the area where *Mbuya Nehanda* (Zimbabwe's legendary heroine) lived, hence the need to protect the area's sacred sites such as Shavarunzi and Baradzanwa (Mugabe, 2017). National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe national director Godfrey Mahachi also confirmed that Manzou was a protected area as it was declared a national heritage site (*Ibid*).

Nevertheless, despite these assertions, the evictions were highly controversial. Firstly, if Manzou farm was gazetted a national heritage, rendering the settlements illegal, why would the government take 17 years to displace the villagers? Secondly, where were the responsible authorities when these villagers settled on the farm? Thirdly, if the settlements were illegal, why did the High Court rule in favour of the villagers, ordering the evictions to stop? Though there may be different answers to these questions, one of the most probable answer is that the forced displacements were an afterthought meant to save the interests of the former First Family.

Although some government and ZANU-PF officials tried to disassociate the former first family from the Manzou forced evictions, many critics including human rights activists stated that the forced displacements were a move by Grace Mugabe to expand her business empire in Mazowe area since she already had other business activities in the vicinity, including a farm, a dairy company known as Alpha Omega Dairy and an Orphanage. The villagers and many other opponents of the evictions stated that the evictions were meant to pave way for Grace's planned private multimillion dollar wildlife sanctuary project apart from mining gold that was abundant in the estate (Mushava, 2015). Rusvingo (2015) avers that although Provincial Affairs Minister, Martin Dinha said that Grace Mugabe had nothing to do with the callous evictions, he admitted that she had been granted a wildlife licence to operate the sanctuary, a move that confirmed reports that the villagers were being evicted to expand her business interests in the area. Thus, the unlawfully evictions of these villagers, substantiate Udogu's (2016) assertion that African leaders and their law enforcement agencies apply authoritarian methods to silence those opposed to the government and its wicked or offensive policies. The illegal evictions also show how influential Grace was as the first lady in matters related to serving her personal ambitions.

Forced evictions and lack of constitutionalism

The forceful eviction of the villagers in Manzou Farm was a vivid example of Mugabe regime's lack of respect for constitutionalism. The constitution is the ultimate source of all laws and lawful conduct (Linington, 2012). Key features of constitutionalism include separation of powers, rule of law and respect for human rights (Fombad, 2017). The attributes of the rule of law include legal certainty, equality before the law, the absence of arbitrary power and the protection of basic human rights (Linington, 2012). Constitutionalism seeks to limit governmental power (Ndulo, 2011). Nevertheless, as noted by Atangba (2014), some African leaders, especially those in autocratic positions disregard the separation of

powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary and they do not like their decisions to be challenged especially by the judges or the media. The accumulation of all state in the same hands, whether of one or a few or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed or elective may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny (*Ibid*). The effective operation of the rule of law depends, to a larger extent, on the effectiveness and independence of the three arms of the state. In this regard, the independence of the judiciary is paramount to enable it to have the capacity and normative independence to adjudicate disputes between citizens and the state (Ndulo, 2011). Grace's eviction of Manzou villagers demonstrated lack of separation of powers between the Judiciary and the Executive. This was evidenced when the police forcibly displaced the villagers despite two High Court orders barring the Minister of Lands and Resettlement, Douglas Mombeshora, Home Affairs minister Ignatius Chombo and Zimbabwe Republic Police Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri to evict the villagers without a court order or alternatively without issuing them with offer letters in respect of other land for them to occupy (Sibanda, 2017). In this context, the principles of equality before the law, protection of basic human rights and absence of arbitrary power were dishonoured. Where the rule of law applies, no one is above the constitution, not the president, not the parliament, not the executive, and every governmental conduct, law or policy must conform to the dictates of the constitution (Ndulo, 2011). The ZRP violated section 219(1)(b) to (e) of the Zimbabwean constitution which state that the Police Service is responsible for preserving the internal security of Zimbabwe, protecting and securing lives and property of the people, maintaining law and order as well as upholding the Constitution of Zimbabwe without fear or favour, respectively (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). The ZRP also violated section 219 (3) which states that the Police Service must be non-partisan, national in character, patriotic, professional and subordinate to the civilian authority as established by the Constitution (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). In evicting the villagers, the police knowingly acted in favour of the former First Lady at the expense of the poor villagers. According to Dissel and

Frank (2012), the lack of accountability of members of the ZRP for human rights violations is a critical issue in Zimbabwe. In the same line of argument, Ndulo (2011) states that the legal system is not perceived by many as effective in protecting the rights of all citizens as the poor and marginalised groups and larger society generally receive poor protection from the law.

Furthermore, the manner in which the ZRP violated the constitution in favour of the First Family's business ambitions validates Paarlberg's (2002) assertion that in Africa, there is rule-by-leader than rule of law. While the resources available to the police are largely inadequate, they often make priorities that favour corrupt politicians and their cronies because they have the monies to bribe these police officers (Atangba, 2014). Most of those that were evicted from Manzou Farm stated that they were not resisting evictions but they wanted an alternative land for settlement (Chidza, 2017). The evictions were a serious abrogation of the rule of law, accountability, constitutionalism and democracy in the country. This represented personal rule rather than rule of law. According to Mayanja (2015) personal rule replaces the rule of law, where patrimonialism is used by the big men to suffocate legal institutions necessary for reinforcing the checks and balances on political and economic anomalies. The juxtaposition of violent, illegal and arbitrary forced evictions on the one hand, and the increasingly strong pro-human rights positions taken against the crime, on the other, captures the essence of the ongoing struggle between those favouring good governance, respect for the rule of law and the primacy of human rights, and those supporting more top down, authoritarian and less democratic approaches to governance and economic decision making (UN-HABITAT, 2008). In brief, Grace Mugabe's eviction of villagers shows that there was little regard for constitutionalism during her husband's reign as demonstrated by absence of the rule of law and lack of respect for human rights. Several human rights that were violated through the displacement of the villagers are discussed below.

Forced Evictions and the Violation of Human Rights

The evictions of Manzou villagers violated a plethora of fundamental human rights such as the right to freedom from arbitrary eviction, the right to housing and shelter, the right to food, the right to water, among others. This was irrespective of the fact that Zimbabwe ratified many international instruments with provisions that protect human rights. Some of these instruments include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on Children's Rights (CRC), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), among others (Tshosa, 2017). Most of the provisions enshrined in these international instruments are also incorporated in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, but the problem is that they have largely remained theoretical rather than practical. During the evictions, the police burnt down the villagers' houses, leaving them homeless (Mushava, 2015). This violated the right to housing protected in several international instruments. For instance, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) states that all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats (Mohammed, 2015). Similarly, the former UN Commission on Human Rights declared that the practice of forced evictions violate a broad range of human rights, particularly the right to adequate housing (Mohammed, 2015). Closely related to the right to housing, the evictions of Manzou villagers also violated the right to freedom from arbitrary eviction. Section 74 of the Zimbabwean Constitution states that no person may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances (2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe).

It is important to note that beyond the violation of the rights to adequate housing and freedom from arbitrary evictions, forced evictions are often violent and include a variety of other human rights

abuses (UN-HABITAT, 2008). Echoing similar sentiments, Mohammed (2015) notes that given the interdependence of all human rights, forced evictions also violate other human rights, including both civil and political rights. Thus, in the case of Manzou Farm evictions, the villagers were displaced in a ferocious manner with some of the victims being assaulted by the police and sustaining injuries (Manayiti, 2017). This infringed on the villagers' right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment enshrined in Article 5 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Furthermore, when the villagers were evicted from the farm, some of them left thriving maize and other crops in the fields and were dumped in the bush area without food and water (Mushava, 2017). This violated the right to sufficient food enshrined in Article 25 of the UDHR which states that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control, Article 14 of the ACRWC which states that every child shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental and spiritual health which includes the provision of nutritious food and safe drinking water, as well as adequate health care, and also Section 77 (b) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which states that every person has the right to sufficient food. Section 77 (b) of the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution further states that the State must take reasonable legislative and other measures within the limits of the resources available to it to achieve the progressive realisation of this right. Nevertheless, the destruction of crops was actually the opposite of the obligation of the State.

Furthermore, the right to education was violated. According to *The Zimbabwean* of 24 March (2017), in an urgent chamber application filed on Thursday 23 March 2017 by Moses Nkomo of Donsa-Nkomo & Mutangi Legal Practice, a member of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, the villagers argued that they were going to suffer irreparable harm if the High Court failed to intervene to save them

as they had been rendered homeless and their children's education had been jeopardised by the unlawful evictions. Some of the villagers stated that since their children were in school, their eviction was going to destroy their education as some of them were due to sit for their Grade Seven examinations later that year (*The Zimbabwean*, 24 March 2017). The right to education is protected under Article 26 of the UDHR, Articles 13 and 14 of the ICESCR, Article 10 of CEDAW, Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC, Article 11 of the ACRWC and Section 27 of the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe. Education has been regarded in all societies and throughout human history as both an end in itself and as a means for the individual and society to grow (Mapuva and Mapuva, 2016). The recognition of education as a human right is derived from the indispensability of education to the preservation and enhancement of the inherent dignity of the human being (*Ibid*). From a child rights perspective, the right to education is important because of its contribution to future human capital and innovations which all help to boost the development of nations.

Additionally, due to the interdependence nature of human rights, the deprivation of the right to housing and shelter as well as the right to food, water and sanitation that was experienced by Manzou villagers also jeopardised the right to health. In their court application, the villagers stated that their health was at risk since their shelter had been destroyed and they had nowhere to go (*The Zimbabwean*, 24 March 2017). They also specified that they faced the risk of starvation due to the disruptions caused on their crops (*Ibid*). Therefore, basing on all human rights violations that have been discussed, Hoshour's (2016) assertion that forced evictions constitute a prima facie violation of the human right to adequate housing, and commonly involve egregious violation of additional human rights recognised in international law such as the right to adequate food, water, livelihood, education, health, security of person and home, freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and equality is highly validated. The evictions also verify the assertion by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2005) that despite the fact that countries have overwhelmingly subscribed to most international and regional human rights norms and standards, ratified

numerous major human rights treaties and enshrined these norms and standards in their constitutions and national legislations, a significant gap remains in their realisation. In short, these human rights violations that were triggered by Grace's desire to expand her Mazowe empire reveals that she accorded more value to wealth and her personal ambitions and not to humanity and this goes against the African principles of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is an African philosophy of social living centred on the ideals of human worth, human-ness, community living, cooperation and compassion (Okoro, 2015).

Forced evictions and the aggravation of poverty among the evictees

Forced displacements have disastrous socioeconomic and psychological effects on people (Ondimu, 2010). One of these consequences is that evictions aggravate poverty among the already poor populations. According to UN-HABITAT (2008), most forced evictions share a common characteristics and one of these features is that it is always the poor who are evicted, as wealthier population groups virtually never face forced evictions or mass evictions. In addition, forced evictees tend to end worse off than before the eviction and it is usually women and children who suffer most (UN-HABITAT, *Ibid*). The Manzou Farm evictions validates the above claims as it was the poor and powerless villagers who were displaced by the rich and powerful First Lady. As discussed below, among the forcibly displaced villagers, women especially those with infants bore the brunt of surviving in deplorable conditions with these small children.

One of the major reasons why forced evictions exacerbate poverty among the victims stems from inadequate or lack of compensation from the government. UN-HABITAT (*Ibid*) observes that in the vast majority of eviction cases, proper legal procedures, compensation and resettlement are often lacking. As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the Manzou villagers were not resisting eviction but were demanding alternative land for resettlement. However, this did not happen because the police were destroying

their houses without giving them an alternate, thereby making them landless peasants, which proletarianised them. Land is a vital resource for grazing, farming and the construction of residences (Warburton, 2005). Lack of proper resettlement for the evictees plunges them into high poverty levels. This resonates with Das' (2006) observation that generally poverty increases among the rural populations with the decrease in per capita land holding. Therefore, if there is to be any significant erosion of current social inequity, there is need to address the marginalisation of the rural populations through equitable distribution of land (Purvis and Smith, 2004).

Besides, forced evictions lead to loss of livelihood activities. Evictees face adverse consequences from displacements, most notably interruptions to income generating activities (Human Rights Watch, 2006). In the case of Manzou Farm evictions, the villagers who were displaced were farmers and this entails that their agricultural activities were largely affected. Chidza (2017) asserts that some of the villagers who were harassed by the police were bold enough to stay on the farms, tending their crops and livestock despite the fact that they had been forbidden to do so by the state authorities. After harvesting their crops, the villagers sold their grains to the country's Grain Marketing Board (GMB) to show that they were not 'illegal gold panners', a statement that was used by the state security agents to displace them Chidza (*Ibid*). However, most of the villagers who were not courageous to resist evictions left their blossoming crops in the fields (Mushava, 2015). Therefore, forced evictions have negative ramifications on the victims' livelihoods. It is also important to note apart from interrupting agricultural activities, forced displacement also disturb other related generating activities. For instance, during the violent eviction of villagers, the ZRP officers also assaulted a businessman and gave him a 24-hour eviction notice to shut down his grinding mill so that the villagers would starve and move out (Manayiti, 2017). This clearly shows that forced evictions directly or indirectly interrupted many income generating activities, thereby heightening the levels of poverty.

In addition to the above, forced evictions make it difficult for the evictees to meet their crucial needs such as food, clothes, shelter,

health and education. According to Schmid (2015), forced evictions increase poverty among those affected as a result of destruction of sources of livelihood, leading to long-term inability to afford important needs. In the same vein, Cernea (1990) identifies eight risks associated with forced displacement namely: landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality and loss of access to common property and services. These eight risks help to sum up most of the difficulties encountered by Manzou Farm evictees. For example, the forced displacement from the farm without compensation caused landlessness among the villagers. Similarly, the act of dumping the villagers in the middle of the bush resulted in homelessness. The villagers were rendered joblessness by depriving them land ownership which was their primary source of living. Likewise, grabbing the land from the villagers as well as forcing them to leave their crops in the fields unattended caused food insecurity. Thus, all these challenges posed the risk of exacerbating the marginalisation of the already poor and powerless people.

Contradictions between Manzou Farm Evictions and Grace's Philanthropist Work

Philanthropy is regarded as voluntary private virtue for the public good (Munigal and Chakraborty, 2014). It is the love of humanity in the sense of caring for, nourishing, developing, or enhancing humanity (*Ibid*). Philanthropists usually do voluntary actions for the public good (Burlingame, 2016). These humanitarians often express their desire to promote the welfare of others by performing benevolent acts such as offering money, labour, food, time, security, property and other goods and services (Munigal and Chakraborty, 2014). Since philanthropists are driven by the desire to promote public welfare, some of them even advocate for social change or social justice with the aim of helping the socially and economically marginalised people.

During the reign of her husband, Grace Mugabe was labelled a compassionate philanthropist who worked tirelessly to support the

needs of the less fortunate, particularly children and the disabled in Zimbabwe (The *Herald*, 30 August 2017). Many ZANU-PF officials and fanatics cheered Grace for her humanitarian work. She was regarded as both a philanthropist and a loving mother of the nation (*Ibid*). For example, *Sunday Mail* of 23 July (2017) quotes Christopher Mushohwe, the then Information, Media and Broadcasting Services Minister as having described Grace as Zimbabwe's foremost philanthropist due to the charitable work she was doing in Mazowe. In the Mazowe area, Mrs Mugabe owned a children's home where she was taking care of orphans from around the country whom she had adopted (*Chronicle*, 30 August 2017). Mushohwe further described Grace as a caring mother, a woman of substance and a woman of meaning with compassionate love on the country's grassroots and downtrodden (*Sunday Mail*, 23 July 2017). Kudzai Chipanga, the then ZANU-PF Youth League Secretary also praised Grace's motherly role not only to her biological children but to the whole nation as well as the African continent (Tshili, 2016). The praise singing for Grace by ZANU-PF patrons saw her being given awards for her 'charity' work. For instance, in September 2014, the Philanthropy Institute of Zimbabwe (PIZ) named Mrs Mugabe the Philanthropist of the Year (Mushava, 2014). In 2016, Grace won the 2015 outstanding value addition Investment Award offered by the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce in recognition of the massive work that she was doing at her dairy company and her children's home (Gumbo, 2016). However, though the adjectives 'mother', 'philanthropist' and 'hardworking entrepreneur' were used to describe the former First Lady, it is important to note that the terms were largely used by ZANU-PF supporters and those who were close to her. To the general public, using these terms was a sarcasm, considering the suffering she and her husband had caused to the majority of Zimbabwean citizens. Some critics also viewed those who were using these terms as people who were singing for their supper.

The eviction of villagers from Manzou Farm serves as a vivid example to query the genuineness of Grace Mugabe's philanthropist work. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, many families (children

included) were left in the open after the police, on Grace Mugabe's directive, razed down their houses, leaving them without food, water and shelter (Sibanda, 2017). Some of the evictions took place before the villagers had harvested their crops, leading to starvation among many families (*Ibid*). Commenting on the former First Lady's land grabbing in Mazowe, Human Rights Commission Chairperson Alec Muchadehama asserted that it was painfully disturbing that the First Lady, who under normal circumstances was regarded as a mother of the nation had chosen to violate the law with reckless abandon (Rusvingo, 2015). Other critics like Obert Gutu, the then Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) spokesperson, and a lawyer by profession also blasted Mrs Mugabe for treating the peasants in a very inhuman and degrading manner as well as corruptly abusing state power by disobeying a lawful order issued by the High Court (*Ibid*). The evictions were also seen as morally wrong as villagers were being evicted without arrangements for alternative settlement or compensation (*Ibid*). According to Sibanda (2017), some of the evicted villagers were told by the police to go back to where they originally came from. Thus, all these condemnations against Grace Mugabe contradicted her roles as a philanthropist.

Considering the suffering incurred by the Manzou villagers, Grace's charity work can be regarded as a fallacy. It was a fallacy because the evictions contradicted her so-called charity work as the forced evictions left many families destitute when their houses were burnt down. Worse still, people were dumped in the middle of bush areas without help, shelter or food. Houses with the sick, the elderly and children were demolished while other people were left sleeping outside in the rubble without adequate shelter in the cold and wetness of the rainy season (Chidza, 2017). This contradicts African values of humanity which include ideologies of compassion, harmony spirit, compassion and dignity. Furthermore, contrary to the attributes of charity work whereby well-wishers give different kinds of help to people who are in need, Grace rather created conditions that necessitated the need for humanitarian assistance. For example, among the people who were forcibly evicted, there were women with very young babies. The *Newsday* (29 March 2017) reported of women

with babies as young as four weeks who were left stranded in the open after their houses were destroyed by the ZRP. In a seemingly worse situation, Nyavaya (2017) observes that among the victims, there was a mother of a 10-day-old baby who had no idea of the fate of her offspring after she was dumped in the bush by the police at the height of the rainy season. Figure 1 below shows images of some of the mothers with young babies living in destitute conditions created by the Manzou Farm evictions. All these difficulties experienced by the villagers clearly show the ambivalence between Grace Mugabe's supposed good-hearted deeds and her actual actions. Below are pictures of victims of Manzou Farm:



Figure 1: Villagers dumped at abandoned tobacco bans, 40km away from Manzou Farm
(Adapted from *Newsday* 29 March 2017)

Since she was described in ZANU-PF circles as a charity worker who was assisting many disadvantaged groups such as orphans, the disabled and women (*Sunday Mail*, 23 July 2017; *The Herald* 30 August 2017), Grace was supposed to act as a shield for the poor villagers. Contrary to her roles, she created conditions that aggravated poverty among the evictees. In the context of children, most of them were made vulnerable to poverty, hunger, diseases and lack of access to education. All this happened regardless of the fact that Grace owned a children's home in the same area. Thus, instead of protecting, assisting and improving children's wellbeing in order to reduce the number of children susceptible to different forms of insecurity, Grace did the opposite by plunging them into several scarcities of basic needs.

It is important to note that Grace's eviction of the helpless villagers did not only contradict her philanthropic duties but her motherly duties as the mother of the nation. Mothers are generally perceived as self-sacrificing, compassionate, caring and above all loving (Schwartz and Isser, 2007). According to Bryant (2003), mothers are the central characteristic in the family metaphor, personifying cultural notions of parental love. They present warm nurturing function of love, the safety of home, the strength of understanding guidance and the irrepressible support for the child (*Ibid*). Within the Shona culture in Zimbabwe, mothers are perceived as family protectors and supreme care givers who are committed to the security of their families, communities and nations (Mazuru and Nyambi, 2012). However, as 'the mother of the nation', and despite the call by several human rights activists to respect the people's rights, Grace failed to show love and compassion to the crying voices of the evicted villagers. Her desire to expand her business activities at the expense of human welfare reveals that she prioritised self-accumulation of wealth rather than basic needs of the people. In a similar line of argument, Shumba (2017) states that the title '*Amai*' (mother) which Grace was lavished with was ridiculous because there is no mother who chooses to adorn herself with costly rings when her children are impoverished. According to the *New Zimbabwe* (5 March, 2018), most of the evicted villagers who were interviewed

described Grace as a selfish woman who did not care about ordinary citizens regardless of the fact that she acted and talked like a saint. In the same line of argument, Shumba (2017) described Grace as being possessed by the spirit of [the Biblical] Jezebel because of her insatiable desire for personal wealth and fame. Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, King of Israel (874-853 BC) who abused her powers as the queen and committed many sins, including facilitating the death of Naboth to allow her husband to take control of his Vineyard (1 Kings 21). Jezebel caused the death of an innocent man which can be likened to Grace's acts which caused the suffering of innocent souls, most importantly, the evicted villagers.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked into the violent evictions that took place in Manzou Farm in Mazowe area. The evictions were believed to have been conducted to pave way for Grace Mugabe's business expansion in the same area given the fact that she had other businesses in the same area. Although many ZANU-PF officials tried to dismiss the view that Grace was behind the forced evictions of the Manzou Farm villagers, the general opinion among the evictees and many human rights activists was that the forced displacements were her brain child, derived from the desire to establish a wild animal sanctuary. The chapter has paid particular attention to the many human rights abuses experienced by the villagers due to the violent evictions. Some of the human rights violations that have been discussed include the right to adequate housing, right to freedom from arbitrary evictions, right to property, right to education, right to health, right to adequate food, right to security of person and home as well as freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The chapter has also discussed the controversial nature of Grace Mugabe's duties as a philanthropist and mother of the nation. Special attention has been paid on how Grace 'created' more vulnerable children through her engineered evictions, an act which contradicted the duties of a charity worker. As a whole, the chapter has argued

that the evictions were a reflection of lack of constitutionalism and the rule of law which characterised the greater part of Mugabe's reign.

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Mugabeism after Mugabe: Idolatry, Blasphemy and the Persistence of the Leadership Personality Cult in the ZANU-PF Party since Independence

Fidelis Peter Thomas Duri

Introduction

During the night of November 14, 2017 and the morning of the day after, a military intervention code-named ‘Operation Restore Legacy’ saw the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) under the leadership of the then Commander, Constantino Chiwenga, seizing state television and placing the First Family under house arrest (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017; Ndebele, 17 November 2017). The then 93-year-old President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, who had been in power since independence in 1980, resigned a week later – on 21 November 2017 – paving way for the 75-year-old Emmerson Mnangagwa, his former deputy, to become the President of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and the Republic of Zimbabwe (Levin, 4 December 2017; Melber, 14 December 2017). On 24 November 2017, Mnangagwa was sworn in as Zimbabwe’s President, officially ending Robert Mugabe’s 37-year rule (Ma, 24 November 2017).

ZDF officials insisted that the military intervention was not a coup but an effort to restore Mugabe’s legacy as a liberator by, among other things, eliminating corrupt government officials who had ruined the Zimbabwean economy and people’s livelihoods over the years (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017; Melber, 14 December 2017; Ndebele, 17 November 2017). It was a matter of international diplomacy and political convenience that both Mnangagwa and senior ZDF officials found it prudent not to find fault in Robert Mugabe. As far as global diplomacy is concerned, the new Zimbabwean elite did not seek to demonise Mugabe for fear of

international condemnation for having waged a military coup. For purposes of political convenience, Mnangagwa and Chiwenga deliberately avoided denigrating Mugabe during the immediate aftermath of the coup because they had been together with him during the liberation struggle and were also part and parcel of his 37-year-old rule after independence. As Melber (14 December 2017: 1) notes:

While Mugabe was a driving force and the face of Mugabeism, he never acted alone. Mnangagwa was his faithful companion for over 50 years. Once Mugabe's bodyguard, he spent several years with him in prison. Together they plotted the... elimination of political rivals. During all the power struggles that occurred, Mnangagwa was loyal to Mugabe...Mnangagwa was a member of the government and the state security nexus ever since independence and coordinated most of the campaigns for ZANU-PF. Rigged elections were as much his responsibility as that of Mugabe and the military, which increasingly governed from the barracks. As Minister of State Security, Mnangagwa was in charge of the brutal massacre of more than 20 000 Ndebele people in the 1980s. He referred to dissidents as 'cockroaches' and the killers of the Fifth Brigade army unit as 'DDT,' an insecticide.

Mnangagwa and many senior military officials who brought him to power in November 2017 were, therefore, part and parcel of Mugabe's dictatorial rule, generally known as Mugabeism, for the greater part of the post-independence period. Broadly, Mugabeism entails Mugabe's legacy of autocracy which included "genocidal massacres (in Matabeleland during the 1980s), rigged presidential elections and systematic clampdown on media, political opponents and civil-society activists" (Melber, 14 December 2017: 1). "In the Mugabeism system," as Melber (Ibid) elaborates:

The country was run like the private property of a combined civil-political and military-security apparatus under the hegemony of ZANU-PF, the ruling party. Since the turn of the century, political repression, economic decline and an appalling deterioration of living

conditions have forced several million Zimbabweans to leave the country.

It can, thus, be noted that, as far as ZANU-PF critics are concerned, Mugabeism was an era of subservience and suffering for the majority of Zimbabweans.

It should be emphasised, however, that Mugabeism as a concept had other dimensions. Generally, as Arthur Mutambara, a Zimbabwean opposition leader and former Deputy Prime Minister during the period 2009-2013, noted, Mugabeism is “the system, values and culture” associated with Robert Mugabe’s 37-year rule (*Zimbabwe Mail*, 23 November 2017: 1). From 2000, ZANU-PF instituted a Patriotic History Project supposedly to restore Zimbabwe’s liberation war heritage and history that it claimed was under threat from the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which had been formed in 1999, and Western powers. Patriotic History, which sought to venerate ZANU-PF heroes while denigrating political opponents, became “the core of Mugabeism” (Ranger, 2004: 7). Having been part and parcel of Mugabe’s dictatorship, it is not surprising that Mnangagwa and many of his apologists in government and various spheres of life inherited some aspects of Mugabeism during the post-Mugabe era.

That said, this chapter focuses on the use of Biblical analogies either by some people in the top echelons of power to legitimise their increasingly unpopular regimes or by some opportunists from various backgrounds to hero-worship political leaders in order to gain favours and enhance the chances of realising their political and material ambitions. This is one critical aspect of Mugabeism that has remained pervasive during the presidency of Emmerson Mnangagwa. The instrumentalisation of Biblical references to eulogise political leaders can be traced back to a doctrine known as the Divine Right of Kings in Medieval Europe, particularly in the 17th century Britain. According to Medieval political theorists, a king is appointed by God; he is therefore sacred and above the judgement of earthly powers. Thus, the right of kings to rule came from God, and that monarchs

were answerable to him alone, not earthly institutions or people (Zulu, 2 December 2014).

In highlighting the continuation in the relentless appropriation of the Bible in ZANU-PF's internal political dynamics from the year 2000 during the reigns of Robert Mugabe and his successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, this chapter advances two major arguments. Firstly, it contends that self-legitimizing utterances by political leaders using Biblical analogies is unconstitutional, illegal and immoral. It constitutes a form of "mild oppression that hinders compromises, enervates, extinguishes, dazes and finally reduces the nation to more than a herd of timid, lost, confused, helpless animals where the government is the shepherd" (Munyuki, 27 September 2010: 1).

Secondly, the chapter asserts that Biblical references are psycho-fanatic machinations of opportunists to endear themselves to those in the top echelons of power in order to be in a position to secure exclusive privileges. Indeed as the chapter will demonstrate, Biblical analogies are a critical bootlicking skill employed by many opportunists in the ZANU-PF party and Zimbabwe's political landscape since the presidency of Robert Mugabe. This chapter illuminates how, during the successive reigns of Robert Mugabe and Emmerson Mnangagwa in Zimbabwe, "bootlicking became the art of survival in ZANU-PF" (Mushava, 31 December 2015: 1). As the Zimbabwean political analyst, Maxwell Saungweme (cited by Kamhungira, 18 March 2018: 1) rightly noted:

The ruling party is an elite cult, knitted around the personality of their incumbent leader. So everything, all systems are rewritten, reinvented to suit the cult leader's narrative. If the leader changes, the narrative changes. It is purely politics, not history. So the ZANU-PF fabric is built on sand and deceit and not genuine history.

This means that ZANU-PF has always been a group of people that hero-worships its leaders. Similarly, some opportunistic church leaders also eulogised political leaders of the time using Biblical references as they sought various favours such as access to material

wealth, ascendancy to political office and immunity from being prosecuted for various offences.

The overall effect of such blasphemous bootlicking machinations is the tapering of democratic space by privileging the political elite with Godly infallibility and cowing the general population into blind submission to the whims of those in power. Broadly, the chapter unravels adventurism into the Bible by various opportunists for political and/or material expediency. For many such opportunists, the association with those in power or the attainment of political power and influence enhance their chances of gaining access to material resources. This chapter, therefore, is largely guided by Karl Marx's materialist conception of History. This is a theory of economic determinism which avers that material/ economic conditions influence social relations and historical dynamics. It is the major contention of the theory of Historical Materialism that historical developments evolve in a relatively predictable manner that corresponds to the prevailing material/economic conditions and dictates (Cohen, 2000). Furthermore, the theory asserts that the attainment of political power is an avenue sought by the upper classes to gain unfettered access to material/ economic resources (Cohen, 2000; Forster, 1999).

Mugabe's self-immortalisation, self-glorification and self-perpetuation in power through Biblical symbolisms

Robert Mugabe often made Biblical references to his position as president in an effort to enhance his ego and give the Zimbabwean population the impression that he was the country's undisputed and infallible leader who would rule as long as he lived. These blasphemous self-eulogies were political instruments deliberately crafted to make the citizenry "docile and listless apostles of Mugabe" (Munyuki, 27 September 2010: 1).

As part of efforts to lionise himself as an undisputed leader of Zimbabwe in the face of a severe socio-economic meltdown from the mid-1990s and the increasing challenge from the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) that had been formed in

1999 under the leadership of the late Morgan Tsvangirai, Mugabe influenced the launching of the National Youth Service Programme in 2000. Zimbabwe's National Youth Service Training Programme, which lasted until 2009, became notorious for deifying Mugabe (Mugwade, 10 April 2008; Shumba, 2006). The curriculum of the programme was largely intended to brainwash and indoctrinate the youths to venerate Mugabe and regard him as infallible like God (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 July 2008; Mugwade, 10 April 2008). This was, among others, done through exaggerating Mugabe's role in the country's liberation struggle against colonialism. Furthermore, the youth recruits in the National Youth Service Training Programme were also oriented to characterise ZANU-PF heroes in general and Robert Mugabe in particular in saintly and messianic ways (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2006).

George Ayittey (1998: 158) rightly noted that the cultivation of a leadership personality cult is a characteristic feature of most dictatorial regimes in post-colonial Africa: "Most African political systems have exhibited various shades of the 'Big Man' patrimonial rule." Chazan *et al* (1992: 162) further elaborated:

The political style fostered is consequently autocratic: Leaders of this sort choose to dominate rather than compromise, to dictate rather than to reconcile. Charismatic leaders in Africa therefore bore the external trappings of omnipotence...to the point of endowing the leader with godlike attributes.

The curriculum of the Zimbabwean National Youth Service Programme was derived from one source, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, reportedly authored by Robert Mugabe in 2001 (Ranger, 2004; Tendi, 2009). In fact, the book is an anthology of speeches delivered by Mugabe since 2000. Most of the speeches in the manual chastise opposition parties, particularly the MDC, and the whites, and glorify the ZANU-PF party and its heroes (Ibid). Every lesson on patriotism started "by raising of fists in the ZANU-PF salute and the chanting of slogans in praise of Mugabe, ending with denunciation of [the then] British premier, Tony Blair" (Mugwade, 10 April 2008: 1). The

ZANU-PF government went on to introduce a compulsory subject in the curriculum of technical and teachers' colleges known as National and Strategic Studies whose content was largely derived from the National Youth Service manual (Ranger, 2004).

In addition to the National Youth Service Programme, Mugabe, with the support of his wife, Grace, often conflated himself with Biblical figures in a desperate bid to legitimise his inexorable rule in Zimbabwe. In mid-June 2008, for example, Robert Mugabe vowed to remain the President of Zimbabwe whatever the outcome of the presidential election rerun that was to be held on the 27th of the same month, arguing that only God could relieve him of his duties (*Telegraph*, 20 June 2008). The runoff election had been scheduled after the presidential election of March 2008 found no outright winner even though Morgan Tsvangirai, the then MDC leader, had defeated Robert Mugabe (Ibid). Addressing business people in Bulawayo, the then 84-year-old Mugabe, who had been in power for 28 years, ranted: "The MDC will never be allowed to rule this country - never ever! Only God who appointed me will remove me, not the MDC, not the British" (Geoghegan, 20 June 2008: 1).

Ironically at this time, the self-proclaimed appointee of God was running a country that can aptly be characterised as "hell on earth" (Herbert, 16 January 2009: 1; *Zimbabwean*, 29 May 2009: 1). Zimbabwe, which this so-called God's appointee and his ZANU-PF government was ruling, was at this point in time ravaged by political violence, mostly state-sponsored, and severe socio-economic hardships that were largely caused by the gross mismanagement of the economy by the political elite (Duri, 2016). Mugabe's self-proclamation as an appointee of God should therefore be dismissed as political grandstanding that was meant to perpetuate his stay in power at whatever cost.

Mugabe remained adamant as he hung on to power. On 21 February 2012, as he celebrated his 88th birthday, the octogenarian declared that he would continue ruling Zimbabwe since he was as fit as a fiddle. He claimed to be superior to Jesus Christ since he "died many times" before but managed to resurrect (*News 24 Archives*, 21 February 2012: 1). He bragged:

The day will come when I will become sick. As of now, I am fit as a fiddle. I have died many times. That is where I have beaten Christ. Christ died once and resurrected once. I have died and resurrected and I do not know how many times I will die and resurrect. I came from the people and the people, in their wisdom, our members of the party, will certainly select someone once I say I am now retiring, but not yet. At this age I can still go some distance, can't I? (*Ibid*: 1).

In January 2015, while addressing a dinner in Binga District, Matabeleland North Province, the then First Lady Grace Mugabe added weight to her husband's sentiments. She claimed that God was giving the 91-year-old Robert Mugabe the vigour and determination to continue ruling Zimbabwe (Foster, 2015). She argued that her husband's leadership in Zimbabwe was "God given" and that people should ask themselves "why God continues giving a 91-year-old strength to lead the country. Where have you ever seen a 91-year-old who can stand for two hours?" (*Ibid*: 1). She went on to warn politicians to stop harbouring any ambitions to succeed Mugabe as the president of the country since there was no vacancy for such a post in the near future (*Ibid*).

On 30 January 2016, the 91-year-old Mugabe reiterated his resolve to continue ruling Zimbabwe until God took his life. In a tirade against critics who complained that he had overstayed in power, Mugabe arrogantly declared: "I will be there until God says come, but as long as am alive I will head the country, forward ever, backward never" (Mushava, 31 January 2016: 1).

On 25 May 2016, while addressing ZANU-PF supporters in Harare, Grace Mugabe proclaimed Mugabe an immortal being, adding that as "a prophet to the nations" appointed by God, he could even rule posthumously from his grave (Chidza and Manayiti, 26 May 2016: 1). Quoting from the Bible, she said:

The Bible tells us in Jeremiah Chapter 5, Verse 1: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." President Mugabe is an unparalleled leader and because you have stuck to principle even in the

face of sanctions, your people now believe you. We want you to remain our leader. We want you to lead this country from your grave, while you lie at the National Heroes' Acre (Ibid: 1).

The veneration of Mugabe as a prophet was meant to earn him considerable political mileage by elevating him to a Biblical figure sent by God to liberate the oppressed people on earth. Micah, for example, is one of the most prominent prophets in the Old Testament who condemned the oppression of the poor people of Jerusalem by the kings of Judah, namely Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah during the latter part of the eighth century BC (Mariottini, 21 February 2014). This was almost the same time when Prophet Isaiah was also preaching hope for the oppressed poor in Jerusalem (Bokovoy, 31 December 2014; Mariottini, 21 February 2014). Similarly, Prophet Amos from the southern kingdom of Judah criticised the upper classes, including the rulers of Judah and Israel, for defrauding and oppressing the poor (Bokovoy, 31 December 2014). Again in the Old Testament, Prophet Nathan chastised King David's political leadership and morality (Abioje, 2010). Grace Mugabe's eulogy was meant to portray Mugabe as a messenger of God who was sent to deliver Zimbabweans from colonial oppression and some of its legacies such as land hunger on the part of the majority of indigenous people.

This section has illustrated how Mugabe, with the backing of his wife, sometimes misappropriated the Bible to apotheosise himself in a desperate attempt to cling to power. These blasphemous statements were part of a propaganda machinery to silence dissent and blindfold some sections of the population, particularly the ordinary poor, into 'believing without seeing.'

Biblical eulogies of Mugabe by ZANU-PF politicians

Mugabe's oppressive regime was constantly oiled by ZANU-PF sycophants through exaggerated eulogies and ludicrous comparisons to righteous Biblical characters. In actual fact, ZANU-PF officials had a tendency of "falling over each other, bootlicking and praise-

singing Mugabe” as they sought for various political and material favours from the dictator (Masekesa, 8 February 2015: 1).

Arguably, Tony Gara, a former Harare Mayor (*Zimbabwe Daily*, 6 July 2017), is perhaps the earliest ZANU-PF praise-singer to venerate Mugabe through Biblical references. In 1990, Gara equated the then President Mugabe to Jesus Christ (Mushava, 31 December 2015: 1). In reciprocation, Mugabe rewarded Gara with a cabinet position of Deputy Minister of Local Government and National Housing (*Zimbabwe Daily*, 6 July 2017). On 4 January 2002, Tony Gara was listed in *The Herald*, a government-owned newspaper, together with other ZANU-PF supporters whose loyalty had been rewarded with land. The list indicated that Gara had been allocated a commercial farm seized from a white farmer in Mashonaland West, the country’s richest agricultural province (Thornycroft, 5 January 2002: 1). Following Gara’s praise-singing precedent and the rewards he reaped before his death in 2006, ZANU-PF members, over the years, “perfected the art (of bootlicking) to either survive or get promotion” (*Ibid.*: 1).

In 2000, when the ZANU-PF government began seizing commercial farms, mostly white-owned, purportedly to redistribute them to landless indigenous people, the then President Robert Mugabe received accolades from many ruling party officials as a Messiah who had been sent by God to deliver the marginalised sections of the population from poverty. Didymus Mutasa, the then ZANU-PF Secretary for Administration, for example, said: “Mugabe is a Messiah sent by the Almighty to lead Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular to gain their land back, the best thing that has happened to the African continent” (Zulu, 2 December 2014: 1).

It should be noted that the characterisation of Mugabe as a Messiah portrayed him as a divine figure deployed on an earthly mission by God. In the Old Testament, according to Morris and Clark (1987), the term ‘Messiah’ means the ‘anointed one,’ a name given to the promised deliverer who would someday come to the people of Israel as their great saviour and redeemer, anointed as a prophet, priest, and king by God. Jewish believers who became the first founders of Christianity were convinced that Jesus of Nazareth

was their promised Messiah. The name 'Christ' is the Greek equivalent of 'Messiah.' In this context, the name Jesus Christ really means 'Jesus the Messiah' or 'Jesus the anointed' (Ibid). By characterising Mugabe as a Messiah, ZANU-PF officials such as Didymus Mutasa were, thus, actually equating him with Jesus Christ.

In March 2011, Simon Khaya Moyo, the then ZANU-PF Chairman, who was fancying his chances of becoming the ruling party's second Vice-President, described the then President Mugabe as a liberator of unparalleled proportions "who God should keep for a long time to rule Zimbabwe" (Guma, 7 October 2013: 1). He said: "His Excellency, you are a liberator of unparalleled audacity. You are a useful and amazing leader and we pray to God to make you stronger and continue to lead us from the front" (*Ibid*: 1).

The then Commissioner General, Augustine Chihuri, a ZANU-PF member who owed his appointment as head of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) to Mugabe, also deified Mugabe in an effort to maintain his powerful post. On 21 May 2011, while addressing ZRP recruits at Morris Depot in Harare, Chihuri described Mugabe as God-given leader who had been firm in defending the country's resources and sovereignty: "We must be grateful to the Almighty for the gift of life and wisdom. Christianity helps a person to understand the word of God and our President is one such character who has shown that one successfully leads if he has faith in God" (Musarika, 22 May 2011: 1). Some five years later on 28 July 2016, in another show of cognisance of where his bread was buttered, Chihuri ordered ZRP graduates to recite a passage in praise of Mugabe who was present to officiate at the graduation ceremony held at Morris Depot in Harare. The "blasphemous demagoguery" (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 5 August 2016: 1), which likened the nonagenarian leader to Jesus Christ, read:

Like Jesus Christ who was crucified by a people whom He saved, you have innocently grappled with all forms of persecution. Your Excellency, the writing is clear on the wall that you are the angel Gabriel sent to deliver Zimbabwe and Africa. Because of you (Mugabe), Zimbabwe is a land of peace and tranquillity, equity, equality, freedom,

fairness, honesty and the dignity of hard work. You have been attacked for championing the cause of the people, justice and equality, for denouncing racial segregation, immorality, corruption, human rights abuses and violence (*Ibid*).

Similar sentiments were expressed on 16 February 2013 by Killian Sibanda, the then ZANU-PF Chairman for Bulawayo Province, who likened the then President Mugabe's predicament to that of Jesus Christ who was betrayed and persecuted by the people he had served (Mhlanga, 18 February 2013). While addressing a ruling party meeting at Eveline High School in the City of Bulawayo, he described Mugabe as a dignified character like the Biblical Jesus Christ. Sibanda cited Biblical narratives in which Jesus performed many miracles, including resurrecting Lazarus from the dead, but ended up being persecuted regardless of the good things he had done. He blamed Zimbabweans who were urging Mugabe to step down for overlooking the role he had played in liberating the country and the various socio-economic reforms he made after independence (*Ibid*). Sibanda argued:

Jesus' people forgot what their leader had done for them. They disowned him and demanded that he be crucified on the cross. Just like Jesus, President Mugabe fought for his people when he struggled with the whites to give the land and its riches back to the people of Zimbabwe, who are the rightful owners (*Ibid*: 1).

In mid-2013, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the then Minister of Defence and ZANU-PF Secretary for Legal Affairs, also joined praise-worshipping crusade. During a ZANU-PF rally held at Gweru's Mkoba Suburb on 27 July 2013, for example, Mnangagwa equated Mugabe to the Biblical Moses who delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt to their Promised Land of Canaan:

You pretend to see, but you do not really see. You hear, but you do not understand. Today I want to tell you that President Mugabe is divine. He is our Moses from the Bible who salvaged Israelites from

captivity in Egypt. President Mugabe gave us farms. He gave us rights to exploit and be rich with minerals. In cold weather, in hunger and in any state of tribulation, we will stand by President Robert Mugabe (Ibid: 1).

Mnangagwa's eulogy should be understood in the context of ZANU-PF's internal political dynamics that prevailed at that time. It is prudent to note that as the August 2013 general elections drew closer, the ruling party was in turmoil as two factions battled over a successor to the then 89-year-old Mugabe who many believed would retire sooner from politics. One faction was led by Mnangagwa while the other was under the then Vice-President, Joyce Mujuru (*The Zimbabwean*, 27 July 2013). In this context, bootlicking Mugabe became one of the vital resources of gaining favours from the octogenarian and enhance one's chances of succeeding him.

In December 2013, Psychology Maziwisa, the then ZANU-PF Deputy Director for Information, also joined the bandwagon of ZANU-PF bootlickers who equated Mugabe to Jesus Christ. In a Facebook posting on 27 December 2013, Maziwisa likened the way Mugabe executed people-centred policies to the sacrifices made by Jesus and castigated Morgan Tsvangirai, the then leader of the opposition MDC party, for being heartless (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 29 December 2013). He argued:

President Mugabe is no Jesus Christ, but the constant persecution which he has suffered for standing for what is right brings him closer to Christ. Yet it is clear that President Mugabe comes closer than most people when it comes to applying Christ's teachings - certainly much closer than Morgan Tsvangirai who does not seem to understand that intentionally destroying people's lives goes against the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These blasphemous utterances immediately provoked angry reactions from many Zimbabweans through the social media, to which Maziwisa unrepentantly responded through another Facebook posting on 28 December 2013:

I have been widely condemned and criticised for writing here last night that President Mugabe's policy of standing for what he believes in resembles Jesus Christ's.... Well, I stand by what I said..... Let us put it this way: this greatest leader of our time may not be Jesus Christ, or the same as Christ but his consistency of purpose, his purposefulness, his ability to stand by what he believes in- whatever the price - makes him more Christ-like... (*Ibid*: 1).

Maziwisa again castigated Tsvangirai and accused him of causing the suffering of many Zimbabweans by seducing women and supporting targeted sanctions that had been imposed on the country by Western powers:

... Morgan Tsvangirai, who has brought untold suffering on his own people, is refusing to call for the lifting of sanctions (never mind that he invited them in the first place) and has broken the hearts of many women despite Jesus' clear teachings around this subject. President Mugabe definitely has the same vision that Christ had, namely that you should not just stand by your beliefs when your critics persecute you, you should also continue to implement them (*Ibid*: 1).

During a luncheon held on 14 March 2014 to celebrate Mugabe's 90th birthday, Mariyawanda Nzuwah, the then Public Service Commission (PSC) Chairman, also joined the bootlicking crusade by praising Mugabe as a Messenger of God (*The Daily News*, 17 March 2014). Predictably, Nzuwah, who owed his PSC post to a presidential appointment, introduced Mugabe during the banquet as follows: "You are a messenger sent by God to liberate and lead us. We ask the Lord to give you more years because you have not finished the job that was assigned to you. You still have a long way to go and as such we ask the Lord to give you many more years" (*Ibid*: 1). Constantino Chiwenga, the then ZDF Commander, who also owed his post to the then President, weighed in:

God has a plan for Zimbabwe and Africa. President Robert Gabriel Mugabe is the central pillar of that plan for the future. We ask

the Lord to give him many more years. This larger than life man overcame amongst other things an early childhood paternal abandonment. He had to take up menial jobs to fend for his siblings. He spent 10 years in prison from 1964 to 1974 during which he almost died. These and other difficulties prove that he is a great man (*Ibid*: 1).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Chief Sikhobokhobo of Nkayi North District, a pro-ZANU-PF traditional leader, in March 2014. Sikhobokhobo urged his subjects to accept President Robert Mugabe's continued rule because he had been anointed by God: "When God sets something, we must not question Him. President Mugabe was given to us by God so we must accept his leadership. The President is such a wonderful and respectful man. I will tell you today that he knows me by name and has so much respect for me" (*Harare News*, 7 March 2014). It is not surprising that many chiefs deified Mugabe, given the numerous perks they got from the ZANU-PF government which included free electricity, farms, mobile phones and motor vehicles (Duri, 2017). During a rally held at Nata Business Centre in Matabeleland South Province in September 2011, for example, the local chief implored villagers to vote for ZANU-PF because he did not want to lose the vehicle and other benefits that the ruling party had given him (Sithole, 15 September 2011).

The ennoblement of Mugabe by ZANU-PF praise-singers using Biblical analogies was also witnessed during a function where the European Tourism and Trade Council (ETTC) handed Zimbabwe two tourism awards on 4 June 2014. While introducing Mugabe at the awards ceremony, Walter Mzembi, the then Zimbabwean Minister of Tourism, equated the then 90-year-old President Mugabe to Jesus Christ, saying serving under him was "like drinking water from the Biblical Jacob's well" (Nyathi, 5 June 2014: 1). Mzembi said:

I find myself in the same position as the Biblical John the Baptist who was a forerunner to Jesus Christ and of the son of God he said he could not untie the laces of his sandals. I cannot tell President Mugabe's story but he can tell mine... Serving under a first republican president is like drinking water from the Biblical Jacob's well. I have heard

testimonies from other ministers across the world who served under the same type of revolutionaries like Tito (former Romanian strongman), Fidel Castro of Cuba, Kenneth Kaunda, Nelson Mandela and Samora Machel (*Ibid.* 1).

Mugabe promptly reciprocated the favour by declaring Mzembi as his favourite minister: “I do not normally say this about my ministers but Mzembi is one of my best ministers...full of brilliant ideas that do not always remain in the head but take the form on action...” (*Ibid.* 1). It is quite apparent, as Mzembi’s case demonstrates, that many political opportunists hero-worshipped Mugabe in order to gain political recognition and elevation. As noted earlier in this chapter, ZANU-PF officials such as Tony Gara were immediately promoted after likening Mugabe to Biblical figures such as Jesus Christ.

Not to be outdone, Joyce Mujuru, the then Zimbabwe’s Vice President, who was harbouring ambitions of succeeding the ageing Mugabe, also joined the bandwagon of ZANU-PF bootlickers. On 14 September 2014, for example, Mujuru told a church gathering that only God knew when the then 90-year-old President Robert Mugabe would remain in power. She argued that it was God’s plan for Mugabe to continue ruling Zimbabwe (Nyathi, 14 September 2014). She added:

We should know that leaders are appointed by God. If God did not want it to be, President Mugabe would not be our leader. It is only God who knows how many years President Mugabe will lead us. It is the Creator’s plan and we will not oppose that. We have to be grateful that we have a leader in the mould of President Mugabe. He led us through the armed struggle which won us our independence that we enjoy today. We have peace which is not enjoyed by other countries. So we owe our peace to President Mugabe (*Ibid.* 1).

Within ZANU-PF, members who idolised senior party officials other than Mugabe were often criticised for seeking to create alternative centres of power. This was the case in mid-December

2014 when Josiah Hungwe, the then ZANU-PF Secretary for Production and Labour, sparked outrage for likening Emmerson Mnangagwa, a former Justice Minister who had recently been appointed Vice-President of the ruling party and the country, to Jesus Christ (*IHarare News*, 16 December 2014). Hungwe had made these remarks in the town of Zvishavane during a function organised to celebrate Mnangagwa's appointment as Vice-President. While introducing Mnangagwa during the ceremony, Hungwe said:

This man who has been made Vice-President has various names that we all know but some of the names you don't know them...He is known as the Son of Man...I can tell you that I received several texts from Bishop Andrew Wutaunashe (leader of the Family of God Church) telling me that the Son of Man will be ordained Vice-President way before these things happened and I just told him that I had heard him because I know he is a Man of God (*Ibid*: 1).

Hungwe's remarks received condemnation from *The Herald* (16 December 2014), a state-owned newspaper and ZANU-PF mouthpiece, which accused him of being loyal to an individual rather than the ruling party. The newspaper argued that Hungwe's "slavish" and "reckless" comments had "the potential of creating another centre of power in the party and implied that Vice-President Mnangagwa was above the one who appointed him" (*Ibid*: 1). From then on, as events showed, hero-worshipping eulogies became reserved for Mugabe.

While addressing a ruling party's Manicaland Provincial Coordination Committee meeting in the City of Mutare in early February 2015, Saviour Kasukuwere, the then ZANU-PF National Commissar, said the then 91-year-old President Robert Mugabe should be given an "endless" tenure to rule Zimbabwe because he was a God-given personality (Masekesa, 8 February 2015: 1). He argued:

We should know that President Mugabe is God-given and those trying to mislead you in not following him are more like saying you

should pray to idols. We should not be willing tools in destabilising the party and the nation at large. I want to remind those that are power-hungry that there is no vacancy in the Presidium. Let President Mugabe do his work freely because we agreed as Zimbabweans to give him a new mandate in 2013. As a party, we repeated that again during our last...National People's Congress and we should always give him more mandates to rule Zimbabwe (*Ibid*: 1).

Kasukuwere's idolisation of Mugabe triggered angry online responses from many Zimbabweans who accused him of blasphemy, among other issues. Some of the angry reactions were as follows:

Truly these guys should just keep quiet. None of them have any understanding of spiritual things and no revelation of the things of God in Christ Jesus. They talk like Job's three friends: like loose cannons who think they know but do not. It will be better if they shut their mouths until they come into some understanding. The Bible gives very clear teachings on what are good leaders, bad leaders, righteous leaders and evil leaders. If righteousness exalts a nation something is very, very wrong in Zimbabwe. Read Ezekiel Chapter 22 for just a glimpse of how God sees our nation, its leaders, its spiritual leaders and the people. We need serious repentance (*Ibid*: 1).

Hasn't Saviour (Kasukuwere) twigged that probably 99% plus want Robert Gabriel Mugabe to go? No one in their right minds are going to pray for him to be here in perpetuity. May God have mercy on Zimbabwe? I wish no harm on him but he has destroyed his land and slain his people. Please go. May God's will be done (*Ibid*: 1).

Singing for supper. I sympathise with this monkey for without...Mugabe, he is totally nothing. He survives on stealing farms and companies and running them down. Remember Comoil, Migdale Transport, United Transport Company? All now history (*Ibid*: 1).

Who told Kasukuwere that Mugabe is God-given to us? Yes, Kasukuwere is singing for his supper forgetting that not all of us are

ministers. Mugabe has just no work in Zimbabwe. He was not even given any mandate to rule Zimbabwe like idiot Kasukuwere's outbursts. It's NIKUV which helped and gave Mugabe the mandate Kasukuwere is shouting about (*Ibid*: 1).

Mugabe was God-given to Saviour Kasukuwere. Mugabe appointed Kasukuwere a minister and ZANU-PF National Commissar, something that must be repaid by foolish praise-singing such as... 'God-given,' 'the only second son of God' and 'the most obedient son'... This is all nonsense to say the very least (*Ibid*: 1).

Despite these online protests from some sections of the Zimbabwean population, the ZANU-PF bootlicking crusade continued unabated. On 29 March 2015, Eunice Sandi Moyo, the then Bulawayo Provincial Affairs Minister, joined the ranks of many ZANU-PF officials in deifying Mugabe, claiming that he was God-ordained, adding that opposition parties would never rule Zimbabwe (Shoko, 30 March 2015). During her address at the ordination ceremony of 43 bishops from different denominations under the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) at the Large City Hall in Bulawayo, Sandi Moyo said:

Mugabe was chosen to lead this country, whether you want or do not want. Opposition parties will oppose until they become old, as they are opposing the will of God. If you are in opposition, you will always be barking. Who are you to oppose those who have been chosen by God? ZANU-PF is the one which has been chosen by God and will never stop and will continue ruling. We have come a long way with people trying to destroy Zimbabwe, but God is in control. God put a river that the opposition will never cross (*Ibid*: 1).

Eunice Sandi Moyo went on to denigrate Morgan Tsvangirai, the then opposition MDC leader, as the Biblical Judas Iscariot, arguing that he was conniving with Western powers to isolate Zimbabwe from the international community and cause untold suffering for most citizens. Moyo, thus averred:

Yesterday we were talking together, but as Judas Iscariot, just because of money he (Tsvangirai) now wants the whites to rule this country. We fought for liberation and said the whites should not lead us. But God is saying no, nothing will ever happen. In 2013 we (ZANU-PF) won the elections and this showed that God is with us. We realised that churches should be included in state celebrations as they are the ones who support us (*Ibid*: 1).

Sandi Moyo's sentiments illuminate how many ZANU-PF officials improvised Biblical analogies for purposes of political expediency. By using Biblical villains to demonise Tsvangirai and according divine status to Mugabe and ZANU-PF, she enhanced the chances of guaranteeing her political appointment as Minister of Provincial Affairs, with the possibility of promotion in the near future. This is because, as noted earlier in this section, it became Mugabe's tradition to reward bootlickers. In addition, the lacing of political statements with Biblical references by Moyo should also be viewed as one of the machinations crafted by several political opportunists to win the support of multitudes of churchgoers.

At times, some ZANU-PF officials blindly apotheosised Mugabe despite the numerous blunders he made, some of which were caused by his old age. In August 2015, the then 91-year-old President Mugabe wrongly read the State of the Nation Address he had delivered three weeks before instead of another speech that had been compiled for the official opening of the Third Session of the Eighth Parliament (Matenga, 17 September 2015). Surprisingly, ZANU-PF Members of Parliament kept clapping hands in approval while the nonagenarian President read the wrong speech (*Ibid*). Worse still, in a bizarre eulogy during a parliamentary session on 15 September 2015, Joseph Chinotimba, the ZANU-PF Buhera South Member of Parliament regarded President Mugabe as a God-given leader, adding that his speech had been very impressive. This was despite the fact that Mugabe had read the wrong speech. Describing Mugabe's speech as "fantastic" (*Ibid*: 1), Chinotimba said: "He is a God-given President. What he said touched me and on behalf of my people in Buhera South, that is what we call leadership, not People First or any

other party...This is excellent” (*Ibid*: 1). Chinotimba’s deification of Mugabe for reading the wrong speech clearly demonstrates “praise-worshipping without limits” (Mushava, 31 December 2015: 1), a characteristic feature of many ZANU-PF politicians as they sang for their supper.

The ZANU-PF Youth League also courted Mugabe’s favours by equating him to Biblical figures. On 19 February 2016, for example, the Youth League declared that celebrating Mugabe’s birthday was like celebrating that of Jesus Christ because both were sent by God to liberate the people. Speaking ahead of Mugabe’s 92nd birthday celebration that was to be held within two days at a cost of over US\$800 000, at a time when many Zimbabweans were on the verge of starvation as a result of a devastating drought, Pupurai Togarepi, the then ZANU-PF Youth League Secretary said:

We won’t force anyone. People who are paying know how the party operates and no one was forced. The birthday is important; it is like the birth of Jesus, who was born to rescue us, the same way President Mugabe was born in 1924 to free all of us, including you journalists to start writing like you are doing now. This is not unique to Zimbabwe, but they celebrate the lives of their heroes... It (Mugabe’s birthday celebration) has been there in drought and bumper harvest and there are authorities in Zimbabwe that are supposed to look at the drought issue. Are you not celebrating your birthdays? We are going to celebrate this day even in war situations because to us it is important (Matenga, 20 February 2016: 1).

In early 2017, the ZANU-PF Youth League reiterated that Mugabe’s birthday on 21 February was as important as Christmas Day because the then 93-year-old leader had liberated and empowered Zimbabweans in the same manner as Jesus Christ had done for many people on earth (Tshuma, 21 February 2017). While likening Mugabe to a Messiah, Kudzanai Chipanga, the then ZANU-PF Secretary for Youth Affairs, said:

We, as young people, regard these celebrations of the President's birthday as of paramount importance given the fact that we view our President as a role model for young Zimbabweans and Africans at large. Celebrating his birthday to us is just like celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. Of course we are not equating our President to Jesus but we regard him as second from Jesus Christ. The fact that he is an empowerer and liberator makes him surpass an ordinary human being and his birthday is worth celebrating (*Ibid*: 1).

Meanwhile, Ignatius Chombo, the then Minister of Home Affairs, had begun holding consultations to declare Mugabe's birthday a public holiday (*Ibid*). Indeed, the tradition of lionising political leaders did not end with the fall of Robert Mugabe. In actual fact, it was Emmerson Mnangagwa, his successor, who, within a week of becoming the President of Zimbabwe, declared Mugabe's birthday a public holiday known as the Robert Gabriel Mugabe National Youth Day through Statutory Instrument 143 of the Government Gazette of 24 November 2017 (Machivenyika, 27 November 2017).

The hero-worshipping of Mugabe by ZANU-PF officials sometimes degenerated into "unprecedented grovelling and bootlicking...amounting to serious blasphemy" (Manayiti and Saunyama, 3 June 2017: 1). On 2 June 2017, while addressing ruling party supporters at Rudhaka Stadium in the City of Marondera, Kudzanai Chipanga, the then ZANU-PF Youth Secretary, for example, equated Robert Mugabe, whose middle name is Gabriel, to the Biblical angel Gabriel and claimed that the 93-year-old leader would "be part of those vetting righteous people who will go to heaven" (*Ibid*: 1). During his address, Chipanga claimed that Bona, Mugabe's late mother, had been inspired by God to give President Mugabe the middle name 'Gabriel':

Truly speaking, in heaven there is God and here on earth there is an angel called Robert Gabriel Mugabe. You are representing God here on earth. But he is an angel. Who doesn't know that God's angels are called Gabriel? I promise you, people, that when we go to heaven don't be surprised to see Robert Gabriel Mugabe standing beside God vetting

people into heaven. *Gushungu* [Mugabe's totem], you are an angel. *Amai* [Mrs] Mugabe, you are a wife of an angel. So when people enter heaven, and when it's Zimbabwe's turn, you will be seated there, with [ZANU-PF] Secretary for Administration [Ignatius] Chombo having names, while you will be vetting those whom you know" (*Ibid*: 1).

Some clergymen expressed their disgust at such tendencies of many ZANU-PF officials to deify Mugabe, arguing that it was tantamount to blasphemy. They also warned Mugabe not to accept such flattery from his party members. On 16 June 2017, for example, Kenneth Mtata, the General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) warned that by accepting blasphemous idolatry, Mugabe risked God's wrath by being struck to death like the Biblical King Herod (Ndlovu, 19 June 2017). Without mentioning Mugabe by name, Mtata fumed:

We hear so many people, whether they are artists or whether they are people who are in political parties, who address certain political figures with religious titles, sometimes even giving them titles of God or some vicars or assistants to God. This...level of blasphemy is very scary but it seems like it is something becoming normal. It is one such example of idolatry in our country where religious titles are given to political figures so that through this kind of praise they can share the benefits of patronage to these people who are praising them. By the way, this is not very new, we saw it in the Book of Luke, for example, when we read of some people who came and praised Herod and they gave him some religious titles and we read in Luke that the angel of God struck Herod when he was sitting there and he died and he started rotting where he was sitting. Idolatry does not only kill the possibility of individuals focusing on the right God but it also kills those that are receiving and enjoying these titles of worship (*Ibid*: 1).

Mtata's warning was indeed a prophecy on the fall of Mugabe. Like the Biblical Herod who was deified by his cronies and ended up being punished by God, it did not take six months from mid-June

2017, when Mtata issued his warning, that Mugabe was overthrown by the Zimbabwean military and replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa.

This section has illustrated how some ZANU-PF politicians sought to brown-nose Robert Mugabe by elevating him to a divine status. It has also demonstrated how Mugabe was genuflected and gleefully accepted idolatrous eulogies by rewarding many of his bootlickers with political appointments and promotion, among other favours.

Biblical references from church leaders to lionise Mugabe

ZANU-PF politicians were not the only section of the population that lionised Mugabe using Biblical references. Some religious leaders, particularly those belonging to indigenous African churches, also became visible on Zimbabwe's political landscape as they literally competed in hero-worshipping the ageing Mugabe instead of worshipping God. As this section demonstrates, many such religious leaders-cum-politicians did so to secure material benefits, such as land and national publicity on state-controlled radio and television stations, from the government to sustain their churches and their personal livelihoods. Furthermore, some church leaders canonised Mugabe in order to seek immunity from prosecution or presidential pardons for crimes they had committed. It is quite apparent that most church leaders glorified Mugabe in a bid to fulfil their selfish ends.

Nolbert Kunonga, an Anglican Bishop, was one of the most outstanding clerics who gained notoriety among many Zimbabweans for deifying Mugabe. From the time of his controversial election as Bishop of the Harare Diocese of the Anglican Church's Province of Central Africa (CPCA) in 2001, Kunonga openly supported the ruling ZANU-PF party under Robert Mugabe (*Sokwanele*, 13 January 2006). He vocally backed Mugabe's controversial land reforms from 2000 during which the government seized many white-owned commercial farms purportedly to redistribute them to land-hungry indigenous Zimbabweans (*SAFA-AFP*, 13 January 2008). Kunonga officiated at various ZANU-PF and state functions, including Mugabe's swearing-in ceremony in 2002 during which he referred to

the controversially re-elected President as “a true son of God” (*SABA-AFP*, 13 January 2008: 1). For his unwavering support for Mugabe, Kunonga was rewarded with the 600-hectare St. Marnock’s Farm in Nyabira that had been confiscated from Marcus Hale, an elderly commercial white farmer (Samukange and Langa, 17 October 2013; *Sokwanele*, 21 September 2004). By accepting the farm, Kunonga demonstrated “a real greed for the material rewards bestowed on those who sacrifice principle for personal advantage” (*Ibid.*: 1). On 17 September 2004, Kunonga mobilised ZANU-PF militias to evict all the farm workers and their families from the village on St Marnock’s Farm. The ruthless militia went on to put to flame the homes of the farm workers resulting in more than 40 families being evicted, in addition to losing shelter and material possessions (*Ibid.*).

Bishop Kunonga was not the only pro-Mugabe cleric who benefitted from ZANU-PF’s violent land seizures. During mid-2017, for example, Rob Smart, a 71-year-old white commercial farmer, together with his young grandchildren and several workers, were evicted at gunpoint from their farm near the small town of Headlands in the eastern province of Manicaland by ZANU-PF youths loyal to the then First Lady, Grace Mugabe (Thornycroft, 7 December 2017). Bishop Trevor Manhanga, the leader of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe, who was involved in organising the raid, was allocated the farm (*Ibid.*). In December 2017, after Mugabe’s ouster, President Mnangagwa ordered that the farm be returned to Rob Smart (*Ibid.*).

Kunonga hero-worshipped Mugabe for a couple of personal reasons. He exploited his links to the ruling ZANU-PF party to hold on to church property after being expelled from the Anglican Church in May 2008 (Mushava, 6 December 2012; *SABA-AFP*, 13 January 2008; Samukange and Langa, 17 October 2013). Kunonga also venerated Mugabe in a desperate bid to secure immunity from prosecution since he was awaiting trial for counts of rape from 2009 (Gunda, 2010). In early December 2012, after consulting his close advisers, including the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), Mugabe decided to dump Kunonga on grounds that he was “creating

too many enemies and unnecessarily discrediting the (ZANU-PF) party” (*Nehanda Radio*, 6 December 2012: 1).

Madzibaba (Father) Godfrey Nzira, a self-proclaimed Apostolic Faith spiritual leader also stole the headlines for raising Mugabe to a saintly status (Guma, 7 October 2013; *Zimbabwean*, 7 March 2011). In 2002, for example, Nzira claimed that Mugabe was a “divinely-appointed king of Zimbabwe and no man should dare challenge his office” (*Ibid*: 1). Nzira’s praise-singing antics were not surprising given that the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) was investigating him for numerous rape offences (*Ibid*). In 2003, Nzira was found guilty for committing seven counts of rape and one count of indecent assault and jailed for 32 years, although the sentence was later reduced to 20 years (*Ibid*). His bootlicking shenanigans, however, paid off in early 2011 when Mugabe ordered his release through a presidential pardon (*The Zimbabwean*, 7 March 2011). Soon after his release, Nzira began campaigning for ZANU-PF in the City of Chitungwiza ahead of the 2013 general elections and during his church services, he even eulogised Mugabe as a God-given leader (*The Zimbabwean*, 7 March 2011).

Obadiah Msindo, a self-proclaimed Reverend, was another church leader who exalted Mugabe in an effort to escape prosecution for his crimes through immunity from arrest and presidential pardons. In 2010, for instance, Msindo was accused of raping a follower of his Destiny of Africa Network Church but was not prosecuted reportedly because he was a known ZANU-PF supporter (*Ibid*). It was not surprising, therefore, that on 4 March 2011, Msindo led a group of Apostolic sect leaders in venerating the 87-year-old Mugabe as God-given and declaring that nothing, not even elections, would remove him from power (*Ibid*). In his words, while referring to Mugabe’s middle name ‘Gabriel’, he claimed: “Angels in heaven placed Mugabe as the President of the country. President Mugabe was made President by God and nothing can remove him; not sanctions or elections. Mugabe’s name is written with the angels” (*Ibid*: 1).

Some church leaders apotheosised Mugabe in order to secure the government’s assistance in carrying out developmental projects

within their organisations. In May 2011, for instance, *Madzibaba* (Father) David Chikobvu, an Apostolic sect leader, said his church fully backed ZANU-PF's revolutionary principles and the leadership of President Mugabe whose mandate to rule, he said, came from God (Musarika, 22 May 2011). Chikobvu went on to request financial assistance from the ruling party for his church to acquire land in Harare, the capital city (*Ibid*).

In early 2013, Bishop Johannes Ndanga, the leader of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe, announced that as church leaders, they stood guided by a 1934 prophecy by *Madzibaba* (Father) Johane Masowe that Mugabe would die in power and urged Christians to support his continued rule in Zimbabwe (Mpofu, 11 March 2018). In May 2013, Ndanga further told his followers that "Mugabe is our king and kings are not elected; they are installed by God" (Guma, 7 October 2013: 1).

On 7 July 2014, Bishop Nehemiah Mutendi, the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) leader, followed suit by describing the then President Robert Mugabe as a God-given leader who had the divine mandate to rule Zimbabwe and improve the living standards of its citizens (*Herald*, 8 July 2014). The ZCC leader was speaking at the installation ceremony of Chief Jethro Mutendi, who also happened to be his brother, at the church's Defe-Dopota Shrine in the Gokwe District. He praised Mugabe for economically empowering Zimbabweans through land reforms and indigenisation policies (*Ibid*). Bishop Mutendi continued:

According to the Bible, leaders are chosen by God. Our President is a God-given leader. That is why he has so much respect for the people of Zimbabwe. He has given us land so that we would have total control of our resources. His wisdom comes from God. That is why he has also earned respect. We now have land and chiefs and other traditional leaders now have their freedom (*Ibid*: 1).

Prophet Walter Magaya, the Prophetic Healing Deliverance Ministries founder, also joined Mugabe's praise-singing bandwagon. On 6 November 2014, for example, he implored Zimbabweans to

remain united under the leadership of President Mugabe whom he described as God-given: “There is no better leader than President Mugabe because leaders are placed in such positions by God. They are occupying such positions because God wants them to lead the nation; so if there is someone better, God will place him/her as well in the future” (*The Zimbabwe Daily*, 6 November 2014: 1).

In November 2017, during the so-called Super Sunday gathering organised by the then First Lady Grace Mugabe at Rufaro Stadium in Harare, Bishop Johannes Ndanga reiterated his 2013 claim that the Robert Mugabe was going to die in office as had been prophesied long before (Ibid). Ndanga told thousands of Apostolic Sect members who attended the gathering that Mugabe would die in office since God had appointed him to rule Zimbabwe. Within two weeks, however, Ndanga’s claims and the so-called prophecy were rubbished after Mugabe was toppled by the military and replaced by Mnangagwa (Mpofu, 11 March 2018).

This section has shown how religious leaders such as Kunonga, Nzira, Ndanga and Musindo were “central in making Mugabe more than just an ordinary politician...and transformed him into some demigod in Zimbabwe” (Gunda, 2010: 203). Above all, the section has demonstrated how some church leaders became part of Mugabeism by abrogating their spiritual mandate and becoming partisan in an effort to solicit for preferential treatment from the political elite.

Mnangagwa’s pursuit of political legitimacy through religious posturing

Soon after ascending to the Presidency of Zimbabwe in November 2017, Mnangagwa took no time to follow in Mugabe’s footsteps by seeking political legitimacy through invoking Christianity for purposes of image-enhancement and luring the support of church leaders and their congregants in particular and the Zimbabwean population in general. On 24 December 2017, for example, Mnangagwa announced his resolve to renew his Christian life, having spent the greater part of his life as a guerrilla during the

liberation struggle and also as a ZANU-PF cadre after independence (Chidza, 25 December 2017). He made the announcement while addressing congregants at the Mabelreign Methodist Assembly in Harare. Mnangagwa told the church gathering that he was born and raised in a Christian family and now wanted to reconnect with God (*Ibid*). He said:

We came to church today because this is where I was born. Since the 1940s, I have always been a member of the Methodist Church. We migrated to the then Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, and went to Kafue Mission, which is also a Methodist institution. I left church to concentrate on the war (liberation struggle). When we came back from the war, I briefly attended church here when I stayed in Tynwald (*Ibid*: 1).

Mnangagwa added that he always had arguments with his wife and First Lady, Auxillia, over Christianity:

We are always arguing at home with the First Lady over church attendance. I am convinced that one can pray to God from anywhere and He will hear them, but she is of a different opinion. She wants us to join others in church. I will try to continue attending. I was persuaded, maybe three times, to attend church in Kwekwe. I am very happy to be here and hope we will continue to come here (*Ibid*).

Mnangagwa's announcement that he was a born-again Christian was received with mixed feelings from Zimbabweans. Some citizens felt that the announcement was part of political grandstanding by the President. Here are some of the sentiments that were posted online in response to Mnangagwa's announcement: "Zimbabweans must not be fooled by this act; this man was responsible for the death of thousands of our countrymen. He is trying to sanitise his sins by this act" (*Ibid*). Another response read: "Is it politics or true Christian intention? Either way: God will prevail and goodness shall come forthwith herein. Thus said the Lord" (*Ibid*).

On the other hand, Mnangagwa's 'repentance' may have paid political dividends after winning the hearts of some Zimbabweans as evidenced by the following online responses: "It is the goodness of the Lord that leads a man to repentance (Romans 2 verse 4) (*Ibid*)"; "Our President is taking a right direction for our destination. As a country, we want to be led by a Christian. That is good news (*Ibid*)"; "Just good to hear those in authority do attend church services (*Ibid*)"; "I think as national leader, his Excellency is not leading the nation in wrong God-ward direction (*Ibid*)"; "Long live our President. May our dear Lord continue to provide you with all the necessary requisites to steer our great nation to its destiny. God Bless Zimbabwe (*Ibid*)" and "Everything has got a beginning. Even sins can be cleaned according to the Bible. At least you can see the direction of our new leadership. They prefer a God-fearing nation from the beginning. They were talking about prayers to our nation" (*Ibid*).

Having announced that he was a born-again Christian, Mnangagwa went a step further, just as his predecessor Mugabe, to claim that his ascendancy to power had God's blessings. On 4 February 2018, while addressing members of Bishop Nehemiah Mutendi's Zion Christian Church (ZCC) at the National Sports Stadium in Harare, Mnangagwa claimed that the political transition that forced former President Robert Mugabe to resign under military pressure in November 2017 was sanctioned by God (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 5 February 2018). He stated that the African continent had saluted the Zimbabwe Defence Forces and Zimbabweans for undertaking Operation Restore Legacy that saw the bloodless transfer of power and his political ascendancy, but hastened to point out that the process was led by God (*Ibid*). He argued:

I was at the African Union (AU) summit attended by African Heads of State. The Chairman of the AU applauded Zimbabwe, they applauded you, the armed forces and all the citizens of Zimbabwe; that you managed to have a transition peacefully. This shows that this was not led by any person made of flesh. It (peaceful transition) succeeded because it was led by God. So, today, I assure you that I and those

making my leadership, we will continue to remember that you said we should lead you and we will remain your servants, ruling according to your wishes, not ours (Ibid: 1).

While pleading for support from church leaders ahead of general elections that were to be held in July 2018, he added that Zimbabwe had a strong Christian foundation and his government would work to uphold religious values of ensuring that peace, love, unity and forgiveness:

Zimbabwe is a Christian nation; let us help each other preach peace, unity, love and forgiveness. The religion of this country should be love, peace, unity and forgiveness. But when you vote, think critically. Ask yourself about the history of the party; what the party has done before to liberate the country. Once you have the answer, then you know ZANU-PF is the party to vote for (Ibid: 1).

During the ZCC gathering, Mnangagwa cited an example of the Biblical Solomon, who was instructed by God to shun corruption. He went on to urge churches to condemn corruption and also act as ambassadors to attract international investors to Zimbabwe in order to rebuild the economy and improve people's livelihoods (Ibid). Continuing in the Mugabe framework of providing material goods to church leaders and churches that openly supported him, Mnangagwa also "charmed the (ZCC) church by pledging government support and also promised to provide it with land to build a university..." (Ibid: 1).

Mnangagwa's quest for legitimacy by invoking God and Biblical references was also witnessed on 30 March 2018 when he addressed thousands of Zion Christian Church congregants at their Easter Conference at Mbungu Estates in Bikita District. He reiterated that it was God's plan for him to become the President of Zimbabwe (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 1 April 2018: 1). He argued:

For this country to develop and prosper, we need to put God first. The Bible says if you build without involving the Hand of God, you

would have done nothing. Let us build a new Zimbabwe born out of the recently-ushered new dispensation. Let us preach love, peace and forgiveness for God to bless our nation. Let us build a new Zimbabwe, and I am sure if we are united, we can build a prosperous and peaceful nation. I think you have heard that there is a new dispensation in the country. It is a new beginning for Zimbabwe and my appeal to every Zimbabwean and church leaders, in particular, is that they preach unity and peace. We are now in a new dispensation and we have a new government, but it is all because of God's plan for this country. *Like Christ, after His resurrection, we also now have a new life, but it is all God's planning.* Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow, but God knows everyone's future [Our emphasis] (*Ibid*).

During the address, Mnangagwa also claimed that God had saved his life after numerous attempts were made on his life in 2017 by his predecessor, Robert Mugabe: "It is God's plan for me to be President. It was in God's plan that I was going to eat poison and survive; become a border-jumper and survive. It is God's plan to be where I am here today. We do not know about tomorrow. It is all God's planning" (*Ibid*).

Mnangagwa's quest for political legitimacy through Biblical analogies should be understood in the context of his past experiences as well as the circumstances that brought him to power. During the *Gukurahundi* massacres by the ZANU-PF government in the 1980s, for example, he dismissed criticism from the Roman Catholic Church by cynically manipulating the Sermon on the Mount in order to justify the brutalities as follows: "Blessed are they who will follow the path of the government laws, for their days on earth shall be increased. But woe unto those who will choose the path of collaboration with dissidents for we will certainly shorten their stay on earth" (Melber, 14 December 2017: 1). It is not by coincidence, therefore, that his nickname is *Ngwenya*, a crocodile in the language of the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe, to liken his character to the ruthlessness associated with the dreaded reptile (*Ibid*). Mnangagwa's religious credentials were, therefore, very questionable and he had to

reconcile with the Christian fraternity by making amends in order to earn respect as the new head of state.

Furthermore, Mnangagwa desperately needed a religious ‘face,’ owing to the circumstances that had brought him to power. As noted earlier in this chapter, Mnangagwa came to power after a military intervention that ousted Robert Mugabe. It was, therefore, prudent for the new president to present himself as a religious figure in order to earn the trust of many Zimbabweans. In addition, it was also of great importance for Mnangagwa to masquerade as a civilian leader in order to avoid international condemnation for having orchestrated a military coup.

Deification of Mnangagwa by ZANU-PF bootlickers

Many a time, history will always repeat itself. After the ousting of Robert Mugabe, it did not take long for “fawning ZANU-PF members” to begin “falling over themselves in search of superlatives to describe President Emmerson Mnangagwa” (Saunyama, 13 December 2017: 1). Another bootlicking crusade began with many senior ZANU-PF officials improvising Biblical analogies to venerate Mnangagwa and demean his once-deified predecessor, Robert Mugabe. This dramatic shifting of goal posts clearly illustrates that the ruling ZANU-PF party has always been “a cult where one is safe as long as s/he remains part of the group and vilified the moment they jump the ship” (Kamhungira, 18 March 2018: 1).

It is quite interesting how the ZANU-PF praise-singing chorus took an about turn after the ascendancy of Mnangagwa to power. Mugabe, who had previously been venerated as God’s prophet who had been sent to liberate Zimbabweans from colonial rule and deliver them from poverty, became demonised. Instead, Mnangagwa was elevated to a Biblical prophet sent by God on a mission to extricate Zimbabweans from the oppression and poverty associated with Mugabe’s 37-year rule.

On 11 December 2017, for example, David Musabayana, the newly-appointed Minister of State for Mashonaland East Province, likened President Mnangagwa to the Biblical Joshua, claiming that he

was the only person with the capacity to emancipate Zimbabweans from economic subjugation (Saunyama, 13 December 2017). While addressing a war veterans' meeting at the ZANU-PF offices in the City of Marondera, a grateful Musabayana enthused: "Let us all support the President; he is the Joshua who will take us to the Promised Land. There was a Moses (Mugabe) who took us from Egypt, but it is this Joshua who takes us there. Moses travelled for...37 years. We are now entering the Promised Land" (*Ibid*: 1).

It is quite apparent that Musabayana was singing for his supper by eulogising Mnangagwa. His utterances came soon after Mnangagwa had announced a new Cabinet in which Musabayana was appointed Mashonaland East Provincial Affairs Minister to replace Ambrose Mutinhiri (*Ibid*). To Musabayana, therefore, Mnangagwa was the Biblical Joshua who had delivered him from the political wilderness.

On 12 April 2018, while addressing guests at a field day held at President Emmerson Mnangagwa's Pricabe Farm near the town of Kwekwe, Vice-President Constantino Chiwenga, also chided Robert Mugabe's 37-year rule, saying the former president was like the Biblical Moses, who successfully rescued his people from oppression, but fell short when it came to delivering them to "the land of milk and honey because of his delinquency" (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 13 April 2018: 1). Chiwenga then equated Mnangagwa to Moses' successor, Joshua, who finally delivered the Israelites to the Promised Land:

President Mnangagwa was anointed by God Himself to lead this nation. Together with his wife (Auxilia), they were put here so that they lead the sheep of God. Moses was delinquent. He took the people out of Egypt, but along the way, he broke the laws and it took Joshua to deliver the children to the land of milk and honey. As you go to vote in the coming elections, I want you to know who your Joshua is (*Ibid*: 1).

It is quite apparent that Chiwenga's eulogy was an expression of gratitude towards Mnangagwa who had appointed him as one of the country's two Vice-Presidents in December 2017. As noted earlier in

this chapter, it is the very same Chiwenga who, on 14 March 2014, while serving as the ZDF Commander, praised the then President, Robert Mugabe, as a “larger than life man” and the “central pillar” of God’s plan for the future of Zimbabwe and Africa (*Daily News*, 17 March 2014: 1). The use of Biblical references to venerate political leaders was, therefore, a typical aspect of Mugabeism that persisted in the post-Mugabe era as political opportunists continued to sing for their supper.

Similarly, on 16 April 2018, Abedinico Ncube, the Matabeleland South Provincial Affairs Minister described Emmerson Mnangagwa as a President chosen by God to lead Zimbabwe (Nkala, 17 April 2018). He made the remarks at a ground-breaking ceremony of the country’s first indigenous tree-planting college at Hannanvale Farm in the Mangwe District of Matabeleland South Province where he was representing the guest of honour, Kembo Mohadi, one of the country’s two Vice-Presidents. The college, which was to be named Gospel of God Church International 1932 School of Environment, was a project initiated by the Gospel of God Church International 1932 (*Ibid*; *Pindula*, 17 April 2018). In his address, Ncube fused religion and politics in urging church leaders to vote for ZANU-PF:

God has already chosen President Mnangagwa. It is God’s will that he leads us. God has since written all that here in Mangwe, we have (Mangwe ZANU-PF legislator) Obedingwa Mguni. When we go to put an X, we will be fulfilling God’s will. Mguni heard your request of the school and said he will give you 100 bags of cement and drill a borehole here, we thank him so much. If I was voting here, I would vote for him for the rest of his life (Nkala, 17 April 2018: 1).

Furthermore, Ncube urged congregants to preach the gospel of peace to the voters during the July 2018 polls. He challenged the church to pray for President Emmerson Mnangagwa and his deputies, Kembo Mohadi and Constantino Chiwenga, and the Zimbabwean Parliament so that the country would have peaceful elections (*Ibid*).

For many ZANU-PF political opportunists, therefore, Mnangagwa was a saint or messiah who had been sent by God to deliver Zimbabweans from the brutal and oppressive legacy of Robert Mugabe. Such blasphemous bootlicking provoked criticism from some human rights activists and opposition political leaders who also employed Biblical references, among other things, to delegitimise Mnangagwa. They cited Mnangagwa's notorious track record of defending Robert Mugabe's rule by brutally suppressing opposition parties during the Matabeleland disturbances of the 1980s and the general elections of 2008 (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 27 November 2017). In late November 2017, for example, Partson Dzamara, a human rights defender and brother of Itai Dzamara, also a human rights activist who was abducted in 2015 and has never been accounted for since, said: "Just because (Mnangagwa) has wrestled power from the devil does not mean I see him as the messiah. So many have been killed, maimed, tortured or imprisoned, and the ones who are presiding over this transition are the ones responsible" (*Ibid*: 1).

Some opposition political leaders also used Biblical references to challenge the legitimacy of President Emmerson Mnangagwa. Addressing church leaders in the City of Masvingo on 28 January 2018, Jacob Ngarivhume, the Transform Zimbabwe (TZ) leader and also a member of the MDC Alliance, for example, claimed that President Mnangagwa's government had been condemned by God (*Zimbabwe Mail*, 29 January 2018). He argued that the demise of Mugabe and the ascendancy of Mnangagwa was simply a temporary transition:

God is ready to transform Zimbabwe. Remember we have tried a number of methods, hoping to liberate ourselves from the oppressive regime. Let God's will be done in Zimbabwe. In a few months, Zimbabwe will be totally transformed. God has given us abundant resources in this country but I have always said the failure of Zimbabwe is a result of the failure of our leadership. Physical change starts in the spiritual realm. The people of Zimbabwe will soon rise as an army because God is ready to transform our country. Mnangagwa is not our

political saviour. Mugabe was the Red Sea and it was difficult for us to defeat him. Mnangagwa is the Jordan River and we will easily cross into the Promised Land. ZANU-PF has rigged elections in the past but this time it will not work. We are praying for a God fearing generation (*Ibid* 1).

This section has demonstrated that, as was the case during the Mugabe era, ZANU-PF officials under the leadership of Emmerson Mnangagwa continued with the politics of patronage which involved equating the Head of State to revered Biblical figures as they sought political survival and various favours. It is lamentable, however, that the deification of leaders shrinks democratic space by elevating those in power to infallible and divine status, and demonising constructive criticism in general and genuine political opposition in particular.

Canonisation of Mnangagwa by church leaders

Many church leaders, including those who had previously been outstanding for deifying Robert Mugabe during his tenure, also joined the chorus of hero-worshipping President Mnangagwa through Biblical references. In their support for Mnangagwa, a considerable number of the clergymen openly demanded reciprocation in the form of material benefits and political positions, among other things, thus clearly showing their hypocritical and opportunistic tendencies. This clearly illustrates how some opportunistic church leaders sought to be accommodated by various political dispensations.

The Zimbabwe Ministers' Fraternal (ZIMEF), a group of pastors, was one of the first religious organisations to endorse Zimbabwe's new president, describing him as a God-given and God-fearing man (Laiton and Ncube, 29 November 2017). On 28 November 2017, while announcing plans to hold a prayer meeting with Mnangagwa, Reverend Nicholas Mavondo, ZIMEF's Chairperson, said: "We want to meet the President as pastors and pray with him together so that he receives wisdom when selecting the new Cabinet. We are aware he is one man who has openly called God to bless Zimbabwe. His

predecessor (Robert Mugabe) never at any time asked God to bless this nation in his addresses” (*Ibid*: 1).

Mavondo went on to castigate Bishop Johannes Ndanga, the President of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe, for having supported the former president, Robert Mugabe. He branded Ndanga as a fake prophet and a crook: “Ndanga told Mugabe in his false prophecy that he was going to rule forever, but what happened? Two weeks down the line, Mugabe was gone” (*Ibid*: 1). These sentiments clearly show how church leaders fiercely jostled among themselves in a bid to secure favours from the new president. Thus, while endorsing Mnangagwa as the President of Zimbabwe, ZIMEF made no secret about its wish to be accommodated in the country’s political space. The organisation urged Mnangagwa to consider introducing a minister responsible for religion in his Cabinet which was yet to be announced (*Ibid*). This clearly shows that ZIMEF’s praise-worshipping of Mnangagwa had a hidden political agenda that included receiving patronage goods, including the proposed religion ministerial post.

On 28 December 2017, the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) also rallied its members to support Zimbabwe’s new government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa, saying he was ordained by God to lead the country to prosperity (Maponga, 29 December 2017). Speaking during a memorial service for the late Bishop Girison Matenda held at Mawarire Village in the Mwenezi District, Lyphet Matenda, an ACCZ bishop, equated President Mnangagwa to the Biblical Joshua who successfully led the children of Israel to Canaan (*Ibid*). He claimed that President Mnangagwa’s rise to power had been foretold by prophets several years before (*Ibid*). He added that while the former President, Robert Mugabe, can be likened to the Biblical Moses who liberated the Israelites from Egyptian oppression, President Mnangagwa was anointed by God to end poverty in Zimbabwe (*Ibid*).

Bishop Matenda also lauded President Mnangagwa for appointing Josiah Hungwe as the new Masvingo Minister of State for Provincial Affairs. He went on to endorse the appointment of Hungwe on grounds that he was a God-fearing man: “Our new

Minister of Provincial Affairs is a God-fearing man and we fully embrace his appointment and will work closely with him to ensure that there is peace and socio-economic development in Masvingo Province” (*Ibid*: 1).

During a National Thanksgiving and Dedication Service held in the City of Bulawayo on 31 December 2017 to honour Mnangagwa’s ascendancy to the Presidency of Zimbabwe, various church leaders abused God and several Biblical verses as they praised the new Head of State. Many church leaders claimed that the new President had been ushered into power by the Grace of God to restore peace in the country (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 1 January 2018; Shumba, 1 January 2018). The service was held at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Grounds under the theme: ‘God has given Zimbabwe the answer of peace’ (*Ibid*; Shumba, 1 January 2018). Apostle Andrew Wutawunashe, the Chairman of Faith for the Nation, for example, told thousands of delegates who attended the service that his denomination acknowledged the role played by Mnangagwa in ensuring the smooth transition of power from Mugabe’s 37-year-old dictatorship. He said:

The transition of power was smooth and it was through the Grace of God. We believe that Operation Restore Legacy was a necessary exercise and it came as an answer to our prayers to bring peace into the country. We appreciate the role played by President Mnangagwa, the war veterans, the army and the rest of the Zimbabweans during this transition period. We also want to commend the First Lady *Amai* (Mother) Auxillia Mnangagwa for her courage throughout the process (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 1 January 2018: 1).

Similar sentiments were expressed by leaders from the Roman Catholic Church, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Federation of Indigenous Churches in Zimbabwe, the Ministers Fraternal, Apostolic Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 1 January 2018; Shumba, 1 January 2018). Addressing the same gathering, Victor Matemadanda, the Zimbabwe War Veterans Association Secretary General, thanked the church

leaders for endorsing Mnangagwa as the President of Zimbabwe: “I am glad that the church is taking a leading role in the restoration of our country. It is clear that God had a plan to restore the country through President Mnangagwa and I want to commend the church for continuously praying for the new leadership” (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 1 January 2018: 1).

During a service of Bishop Nehemiah Mutendi’s Zion Christian Church (ZCC) held at the National Sports Stadium in Harare on 4 February 2018, some senior church members showered praises on President Mnangagwa as a God-given leader. One of the officials described Mnangagwa as “the Biblical Joseph sent by God and given wisdom to lead the country” (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 5 February 2018: 1). He added that Mnangagwa had survived many attempts on his life during Mugabe’s rule “because God had a plan for him, the plan to make him the ruler of Zimbabwe” (Ibid).

Tendai Ruben Mbofana (7 March 2018: 1), the Programmes Director of the Zimbabwe Network for Social Justice, bemoaned how church leaders “fell over each other” in “blasphemy just to please Mnangagwa.” He lamented:

As a devout Christian, it is always painful to hear any form of blasphemy against Jehovah God, but it is most insulting when it emanates from those who should know better - the church and its leaders - especially, when they act as sycophants and bootlickers, eager to please worldly leaders. This blatant blasphemy cannot be left unchallenged, especially by those who genuinely love God and seek the truth to be told to all - as we are the light of the world. First and foremost, as much as the Holy Bible says that all leaders are appointed by God, all that means is that, for a leader to be in that position, only God could have allowed for it to happen. It does not - by any stretch of the imagination - mean that God anointed that person to be leader, nor that He approves of that person. All it means is that, as nothing happens - no matter how evil - without God allowing it for a reason, no one can become a leader - no matter what means they use to get to that position - without Him permitting it. Even the biblical Job could only be made sick and lose all his worldly wealth, at the hands of Satan,

only because God had allowed it - but, made certain that he would not die - so that His glory would shine at the end. Thus, even leaders as Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, Caesar, the pharaohs of ancient Egypt, and so many others, managed to be leaders because God allowed it to happen. In the same vein, Ian Douglas Smith, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and now Mnangagwa, became our leaders, as a result of God allowing it to happen...

As all Zimbabweans can attest to, Mugabe and Mnangagwa sought, and still seek, glory for themselves, and not for Jehovah. Everything they do is so that they themselves are thanked and praised, and never do we see Jehovah being given all the glory. That is why a personality cult is always built around leaders such as Mugabe and Mnangagwa - as they are there to serve only themselves, and not God. That is why we see portraits of our presidents everywhere, their faces are worn by supporters - who, together with the state media, sing their praises every time - but, never do we ever hear the name of Jehovah being glorified above all other names... Thus, anyone who does anything so that he or she is the one who gets the praises, is clearly not of God - as only God is worthy of the glory and the praises. Therefore, we can convincingly conclude that neither Mugabe nor Mnangagwa were divinely appointed by Jehovah, as none were followed by certain signs as evidence - and that the church and its leadership should stop blaspheming God in order to placate worldly leaders.

Mbofana (7 March 2018: 1) went further to explain why church leaders were engaged in fierce competition to please Mnangagwa by associating him with God and other Biblical figures:

The question then is: why are these church leaders committing such acts? It would be safe to say that, birds of a feather, flock together - as these church leaders are truly of the world, not of Jehovah. We have said it time after time that, these church leaders are just crooks - wolves in sheep's clothing - out to steal from the already suffering people. They do not serve Jehovah, but themselves, and their true master - whom, they themselves know... These church leaders are very

much of the world, just as the worldly leaders they seek to carry favour with - even if it means committing brazen acts of blasphemy, and insulting Jehovah God. That is why they would rather sit these worldly leaders at the high tables in their churches, as they show to all that these are truly who they serve. They seek to serve and please worldly leaders who have blood on their hands, and who continue to do everything that is contrary to the word of the true God - as they live lavish lifestyles at the expense of the suffering people. Genuine church leaders would, instead, rebuke such malicious and callous behaviour by those who lead our nation - as John the Baptist did to Herod, who had committed adultery by marrying his brother's wife, Herodias. Even the prophet Nathan rebuked King David when he had committed adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, and murdered her husband. Genuine church leaders need to stand firm and bravely against worldly politicians who abuse the people they are supposed to protect and provide for - not giving them a place at the high table. This should be a wake-up call to all Christians to be very wary of all these church leaders, as they have shown their true colours - as nothing but worldly predators, out to sap with the Devil.

Maponga's protestation fell on deaf ears as church leaders continued to canonise Mnangagwa. During a meeting with Mnangagwa in Harare on 5 March 2018, many church leaders stampeded to praise the Head of State and also endorsed his candidature for the forthcoming presidential elections (Manayiti, 6 March 2018). Reverend Muchechetere, who was the Director of Ceremonies kick-started the chorus of praising the President and his deputy, Constantino Chiwenga, using Biblical analogies. He likened Mnangagwa and Chiwenga to the Biblical Joshua and Caleb respectively, arguing that they would deliver Zimbabwe to the Promised Land (Mawawa, 6 March 2018). Nehemiah Mutendi, the Zion Christian Church leader, described Mnangagwa as a mature politician: "We will pledge on behalf of the bishops, we will advise our members and we will tell the truth that this is the person we must support. Let us give him the opportunity" (Manayiti, 6 March 2018: 1).

Not to be outdone, Bishop Johannes Ndanga, who as earlier noted, had sung Mugabe's blasphemous eulogies many times on end, equated Mnangagwa to the Biblical Joshua (Ibid). He ranted:

All what is happening in the country your Excellency is very normal, because Moses did not take the Israelites to Canaan, but they were taken to the Promised Land by Joshua. Mugabe, in God's word, was not allowed to take Zimbabweans to Canaan, but God wants Mnangagwa to take the children of this country to the Promised Land. Our duty, your Excellency, is to follow what God wants us to do and we are here to endorse you and we want these engagements to continue and not to be a one day thing (Mpofu, 11 March 2018: 1).

It is quite ironic that Ndanga, who in 2013, had prophesied that the then President Mugabe would rule Zimbabwe until his death was now valorising Mnangagwa (*Zim Eye*, 7 March 2018). Ndanga's shifting of goal posts was not surprising if one considers the material demands he tabled before President Mnangagwa during the meeting. The clergyman requested Mnangagwa to avail free land in urban areas to religious leaders where they could build their churches and homes (Ibid). Indeed, Ndanga's material demands were met when President Mnangagwa announced during the meeting that the government would provide pastors and prophets of indigenous churches with stands to build their residences and places of worship (Ibid).

Such blasphemous praise-singing by church leaders was condemned by a number of Zimbabwean human rights activists. Dewa Mavinga, the Human Rights Watch Director for Southern Africa, for example, protested:

The Church and church leaders must always be non-partisan, always being the moral conscience of society speaking truth to power. What church leaders did, to endorse the ZANU-PF presidential candidate ED (Mnangagwa), is both shameful and unacceptable. These church leaders are promoting polarisation and partisan politics when their churches have people from all walks of life and diverse political backgrounds. Is the Zion Church only for ZANU-PF members?

Church leaders must promote multi-party democracy and plurality, and desist from peddling a misguided one-party doctrine (Manayiti, 6 March 2018: 1).

Partson Dzamara, another human rights defender, weighed in:

In as much as I subscribe to the notion that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future, this development is worrying. For starters, Mnangagwa still has a long journey to sainthood. Indeed, the church is the salt of the earth and, of course, it must be involved in the governance process. It must stand for these pillars, among other things: justice, love, peace, and good governance. As far as Mnangagwa's government is concerned, it certainly falls short in satisfying these pillars. How the church, therefore, chooses to endorse such a government is definitely morally and spiritually wrong. What the church should be doing is lobbying that the government upholds such pillars (*Ibid*: 1).

It should be emphasised that the canonisation of Mnangagwa by various church leaders was largely motivated by material considerations. During the meeting, as noted above, the religious leaders went on to request the government to avail land for church projects while others demanded the return of their land forcibly acquired during the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme from 2000. Mnangagwa promised to consider their demands (*Ibid*). The church leaders therefore carried the day.

The hero-worshipping of Mnangagwa by church leaders continued during the ZCC Easter Conference held at Mbungu Estates in Bikita District on 30 March 2018 when Bishop Nehemiah Mutendi exalted the President as a God-fearing man who had assumed office in a peaceful manner (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 1 April 2018). Mutendi went on to urge his followers to be supportive of the new government:

It is clear from what happened during Operation Restore Legacy leading up to the new dispensation that God's hand was at work. The

whole process had God's blessings and it was His plan. That is why it happened in the way it did, and that process will always remain a very important one in the history of our country. As we are celebrating Easter, we should also be celebrating the new dispensation in our country and our God-given national leaders. We will pray with any leader who is President, irrespective of political affiliation. Let us pray for President Mnangagwa because he is in the driving seat of our country. We cannot pray for the bus (country) and leave out the driver (President Mnangagwa). We have to pray for both the bus and the driver (*Ibid*: 1).

Church leaders, therefore, constituted a considerable population of Mnangagwa's praise-singers, a situation that also prevailed during the reign of Robert Mugabe. The content of many of their eulogies was largely characterised by blasphemy and hypocrisy. This section has also demonstrated how, instead of leading their congregants by example, some religious leaders even clashed among themselves as they sought favours from President Mnangagwa, abrogating part of their role as peace-makers in the process. Such clashes were largely the result of the desire of some so-called clergymen to reap material benefits through deifying political elites, thus exposing not only their materialistic and opportunistic tendencies, but also outright hypocrisy.

Conclusion

This chapter has illuminated the tendency of ZANU-PF politicians and various other opportunists to appropriate the Bible and Christianity for political expediency and personal aggrandisement. It has illustrated how this blasphemous and hypocritical form of politicking, which was characteristic of Mugabeism, persists in the post-Mugabe era. Both Mugabe and Mnangagwa sought to legitimise their presidency by manipulating the Bible and associating themselves with Christianity while many opportunists followed suit by displaying a penchant for bootlicking through the use of Biblical references to glorify the prevailing Head

of State in an effort to seek favours. This blasphemous and hypocritical brand of political grandstanding, which desecrated God's name, is a veritable manifestation of the enterprising nature of some people to survive in prevailing political dispensations. Overall, these political machinations culminate in state capture, a situation in which the running of the state becomes privatised by a so-called infallible and absolute ruler with the support of a group of cronies. There is, therefore, need to depersonalise politics and political institutions and address the pressing needs of the people in post-Mugabe Zimbabwe in particular and the world in general.

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The Conflicting Legacy of Vocational Education and Training for Youths with Hearing Impairment in ‘Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe’

Chenjerai Munwaniki & Martin Musengi

Introduction

This chapter discusses the conflicting legacy of vocational education and training (VET) for youths with hearing impairment in Zimbabwe under the presidency of Robert Mugabe. Robert Mugabe is widely credited with the successful implementation of policies in education in Zimbabwe. Such successes are evident in the opening up of educational provisions to previously marginalised groups, among them hearing-impaired youths. The chapter acknowledges Mugabe’s reforms in education generally but focuses more on VET, highlighting education for hearing-impaired youths in order to demonstrate how these strides have resulted in a conflicting legacy. The focus on hearing-impaired youths is apt because the Mugabe government’s policies and practices have been particularly inconsistent for this group as government has prevaricated between treating them as disabled or non-disabled persons. The chapter recognises that Mugabe inherited a discriminatory VET system that favoured “White” and able-bodied males but managed to quantitatively expand it to accommodate a more diverse population. It argues, however, that despite the quantitative expansion, Mugabe’s success in qualitatively democratising education is uncertain because of massive unemployment and underemployment of many hearing-impaired youths.

The arguments in the chapter are guided by two major questions: Has VET for hearing impaired youths achieved its intended goals? To what extent do VET goals complement or contradict an empowering education for the general population and for the hearing

impaired youths? These questions are discussed in this chapter as it navigates youth employment, employability, self-employment and the contestation between an academic and vocational curriculum for hearing-impaired youths. To navigate these issues, the chapter traces the growth and development trajectory of Mugabe's VET policies generally and uses the education of hearing-impaired youths to illustrate the apparent successes and failures in the legacy. These failures are illustrated by the many hearing-impaired youths who underwent VET but ended up doing menial jobs for which they had not been trained while the successes are highlighted in the formation of powerful deaf people's organisations that empowered hearing-impaired communities.

Vocational education and training and employability of the hearing impaired youth: Some conceptual analyses

This section strives to unpack key terms such as vocational education and training, hearing impairment and employability as used in this chapter. There are so many definitions of the concept Vocational Education and Training (Billet, 2011). The term VET is used mainly in European countries whereas UNESCO prefers to use Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EuropeAid, 2014). UNESCO prefers this term arguing that this is an activity taking place in a variety of institutions such as schools, post school vocational training institutions as well as in enterprises (King, 1993). Vocational Education and Training (VET), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Further Education and Training (FET) are terms often used interchangeably to refer to education mostly focusing on youths for acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life (Agrawal, 2013; UNESCO, 2013). In this chapter, VET is taken to mean skills training for out-of-school youths and young adults in government and non-government vocational training centres registered by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. In this chapter 'youth' is defined as anyone between the ages of 15 and 35 in line with both

the Continental definition as well as Zimbabwe's Constitution (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013).

Hearing impairment means the inability to perceive sounds through the natural auditory channel. Hearing impairment implies that a person's hearing threshold is above the normal range of -10 to 15 decibels (dB). Normally hearing people can hear the quietest sounds at -10 dB and have no problems hearing whispered to normal conversation which is usually up to 15 dB. Hearing loss is considered to be slight when someone cannot hear sounds between 15 and 35 dB. It is considered "mild" when the degree of hearing loss is between 40 and 55 dB (Chiinze & Tambara, 2000). Not hearing sounds between 55 dB but less than 70 dB is called moderate and means the individual may only be able to hear loud to shouted speech. The range from slight hearing loss to moderate hearing loss is usually referred to as 'hard of hearing'. Hard of hearing describes individuals whose hearing is impaired but functional in terms of being able to comprehend some speech through residual hearing (*Ibid*). Not hearing sounds between 70 dB and 90 dB is called severe hearing loss and in extreme cases (not hearing even sounds louder than 90 dB) it is called profound hearing loss in which case an individual may only be able to hear gunshot sounds at very close range. Those who are deaf have a severe to profound hearing impairment resulting in little or no residual hearing even with the assistance of hearing aids or other assistive devices (Heckendorf, 2009). Individuals with severe or profound hearing losses are in categories that are usually collectively called 'deaf'. Hearing impairment is therefore a catchall phrase which includes both 'hard of hearing' and deaf individuals (*Ibid*). In the context of this chapter, therefore, a hearing-impaired youth is someone between the ages of 15 and 35 who is either hard of hearing or has no usable hearing.

Employability occupies a central place in VET. The chapter adopts Hillage and Pollard's (1998) definition of employability which notes that it is the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required. This understanding is crucial in that it identifies key elements which determine employability including the possession of assets in terms

of the knowledge, skills and attitudes, the way these are used, deployed, presented to employers, and crucially, the context including the circumstances in the labour market (Ibid). There has been a focus on enhancing the employability of VET students with disabilities for them to be able to participate in the labour market (Riddell, Baron, & Wilson, 2001). The unemployment of people with disabilities is higher than for the non-disabled (Harvey, 1998, 2001; Wagner, 1991). Since there are many other competing definitions of the same concepts, the conceptual analyses done in this section assist in clarifying operational definitions in order to make this chapter's focus clearer. The chapter focuses specifically on how VET for youths with hearing impairment has affected their employability in the Mugabe era and in order to set the context for this focus, the next section briefly explores the colonial legacy.

The colonial legacy

Robert Mugabe assumed power in Zimbabwe in April 1980 after a protracted liberation struggle led by Joshua Nkomo's Zipra and Robert Mugabe's Zanla guerrillas (Mlambo, 2014). Prior to Mugabe's assumption of power, two different systems of education existed in the colonial era. The colonial government in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) introduced two different education systems, supported by discriminatory policies one for the majority native African population (Blacks) and the other for the White minority population. The pre-independence era was characterized by policies which were discriminatory in nature and which marginalized and disadvantaged the majority of the population (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011; UNDP, 2012). There were severe restrictions on access to schooling for black students: 50 per cent of eligible students could be admitted to first grade, 37 per cent of the same cohort would be admitted to the sixth grade, 17 per cent into form one, 12 per cent into form three, 5 per cent into Form 5 and one per cent into university (Mpfu et al., 2007). Such practices were meant to perpetuate White supremacy and Black subordination and dehumanization. This was also the case in the area of VET for people

living with disabilities (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004). Robert Mugabe inherited an underfunded VET system for Africans with disabilities which reflected the discrimination that existed in colonial Zimbabwe (Dorsey, 1989; Zvobgo, 1986). Three special schools for learners with hearing impairment were established on the basis of charity during the pre-independence era. The first was opened in 1926 by Dominican nuns at Loreto Mission in rural Kwekwe but in 1978 it relocated to Emerald Hill suburb in Harare to escape the escalating war of liberation in the rural area. The school is now based in Harare where it is called Emerald Hill School for the Deaf (Hlatywayo, 2018). The second was opened in 1947 by the Dutch Reformed Church at Pamushana Mission in Bikita. The school relocated to Morgenster Mission because of water shortages at Pamushana Mission. The school is now called Henry Murray School for the Deaf. A Zimbabwean charitable organisation, the Jairos Jiri Association, established Jairos Jiri Naran School in Gweru in 1968 (Musengi, 1999). During the colonial period, most learners with hearing impairment were placed in these three boarding institutions where they underwent elementary education after which most of them were then taught practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leatherwork, sewing and cookery (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004). Peresuh and Barcham (1998) observed that in colonial Zimbabwe, the teaching of such children was considered more of a moral and religious obligation than a right, as churches and humanitarian organisations like the Jairos Jiri Association educated children with hearing impairment without national coordination and direction. The charity perspective of the time was tampered with a medical model which treated the learners with hearing impairment as disabled and therefore in need of therapy through VET (Musengi, 1999). The intention was to fix or remediate them so that they could later fit into mainstream society.

Since the focus in the three special schools was to equip hearing-impaired persons with low-level VET skills in areas such as basketry, woodwork, leatherwork, sewing and cookery (Chitiyo and Wheeler, 2004), many of the graduates lacked skills for employment on the open market and in competitive self-employment. Chimedza (2001)

confirms this trend with the finding that people with hearing impairment in Zimbabwe were usually employed in crafts rather than in mainstream professions. They had been trained in quasi-sheltered workshops in the special schools and this made it difficult for them to compete on the labour market. Failure by youths with hearing impairment to acquire necessary skills for the labour market resulted in their exclusion from participating in the mainstream economy alongside their non-disabled counterparts. Robert Mugabe's ascendancy to power in 1980 created hope for equal opportunities and access to the resources necessary for the acquisition of abilities and skills enabling meaningful societal participation for all, including people with disabilities. This is because Mugabe was influenced ideologically by the need to promote egalitarian societal values as enshrined in ZANU (PF)'s 1980 election manifesto. Under Mugabe's rule, VET for hearing impaired youths can be categorized into distinct phases some of which appear to strive for egalitarian ideals and others that are negatively influenced by political and economic developments in the country as discussed in the following sections.

Post-colonial VET for hearing impaired youths in Zimbabwe

Post-independence Zimbabwe can be categorised into five distinct phases for ease of analysis based on the socio-economic and political developments which had influence on VET provision for youths with hearing impairment. These are: the Decade of Growth (1980- 1990), the Economic Liberalisation Period (1991-1996) the Crisis Period (1999-2009); the Government of National Unity (GNU) period (2009 – 2013) and the current period (2013 – 2018). Each of these periods is briefly described here. The period between 1980 and 1990 was characterized by massive expansion of education provision (both quantitatively and qualitatively). According to UNESCO (1997) enrolment in primary and secondary schools from 1979 to 1992 rose from 800000 to 2, 4 million and 66 000 to 688 000, respectively. The number of primary schools increased from 2 400 to 4 500 while the number of secondary schools increased from 177 to 1 500 during the same period (*ibid*). This was in the backdrop of

massive central government budgetary support for education. Education was regarded as the key enabler for all other sectors of the economy.

The period between 1991 and 1998 was characterized by reduction in government investment in social services as a result of economic liberalization. Financial support for the education sector therefore fell during this period and there was stagnation in the provision of education infrastructure and related resources. The third phase between 1999 and 2013 was characterized by hyperinflation and economic meltdown which reversed some of the early post-independence gains in education. In 2009 a government of national unity (GNU) was formed after disputed elections and it successfully revived and stabilized the ailing economy and social services such as education. The fourth phase was a period in which Mugabe once again took sole responsibility for governing and this was marked by factionalism in the ruling ZANU (PF) party and an ageing Robert Mugabe gradually losing control of government business, resulting in confusion in policy formulation, interpretation and implementation. Each of the four phases is discussed in detail in the ensuing sections.

VET provision for hearing-impaired youths during the decade of growth, 1980 to 1990

During the period 1980-1990, the Zimbabwean government of Robert Mugabe was widely credited for democratizing education in general and VET provision for people with disabilities in particular (Muwaniki & Muvirimi, 2017; Kanyenze *et al.*, 2011). In the first decade of independence, the country witnessed significant growth in most sectors of the economy including agriculture, mining and industry, and in social services, including education and health (McGrath, 1993; Mlambo, 2014). These developments saw improvements in living standards of many people. Studies of Zimbabwe's post-independence economic history have revealed that the country was on a path of growth and progress and was the envy of many on the continent and beyond (Kanyenze *et al.*, 2011; Vurayai & Muwaniki, 2016). The National Manpower Survey of 1981 set the tone for skills development interventions aimed at improving the

manpower requirements of the country (Kanyenze *et al.*, 2011). The survey exposed the critical shortage of skilled manpower in Zimbabwe due to the outmigration of skilled personnel to South Africa, the United Kingdom and Australia (*Ibid*). At independence, the VET workforce was composed of 8% professionals, 12% skilled, 20% semi-skilled and 60% unskilled (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981). The Government of Zimbabwe became a significant player in the provision of mainstream VET to complement the efforts of non-governmental organisations and the private sector (Muwaniki & Muvirimi, 2017).

The post-independence expansion of VET provision in Zimbabwe was guided by the Education Act (1987) and later the Education Act (2006) which were used to formulate a number of policy objectives (Nherera, 2000). Thus, vocational education in Zimbabwe became governed by Acts of Parliament which empower the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education with the responsibility to superintend over all human development issues through the Manpower Planning Development Act (1984, 1996, and 2002). These Acts and policies sought to improve the match between skills demand and supply by encouraging stakeholder participation in the design and provision of education and training (National Report on the Status of Education in Zimbabwe 2008; Kanyenze *et al.*, 2011).

Upon attaining independence, Zimbabwe made reforms in the education curriculum, among the most notable being the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP). The ZIMFEP programme was aimed at infusing education with production EWP in the education system (UNESCO, 1997). ZIMFEP sought to realign what was taught in schools with real life problems. This was done through teaching practical subjects, with agriculture being at the core of the curriculum in all ZIMFEP schools (Government of Zimbabwe, 1985; UNESCO, 1997). The ZIMFEP programme sought to deal with the challenges of structure, content and methods used in the delivery of practical subjects under the F2 system that was used during colonial times (Government of Zimbabwe, 1985). ZIMFEP, with its emphasis on the need for manpower skilled in several vocational trades, led the government to

establish technical colleges to train vocational teachers so that they could equip students with vocational skills in the schools especially in trades not offered at the only university then; the University of Zimbabwe (Government of Zimbabwe, 2005; UNESCO, 1997). From 1982 onwards, Gweru Technical College was mandated to train VET 'teachers' for schools as well as lecturers for other technical colleges in Zimbabwe. The majority of those trained included vocational teachers for secondary schools in the following disciplines: Electrical Engineering, Metal Work, Technical Graphics, Building, Computer Science, Accounting and Secretarial Studies. After initial training at Gweru Technical College, they would move into vocational occupations while others furthered their studies in the newly formed degree awarding universities such as Harare Institute of Technology (HIT), Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) and the National University of Technology (NUST) (UNESCO, 2013).

In 1990, the government of Zimbabwe introduced the Rationalisation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training policy document in order to structure VET into levels for easier progression in professional development (Kanyenze *et al.*, 2011). The lowest level was the Pre-Vocational (PVC), followed by the National Foundation Certificate (NC), the National Diploma (ND) and the highest level was the Higher National Diploma (HND) which was equivalent to an undergraduate degree (Government of Zimbabwe, 2005). From the above discussion it emerges that there was significant progress in the mainstream provision of VET during the first decade of independence as government took a central role in policy development. In the traditional schools for learners with hearing impairment however, VET remained largely at the Pre-Vocational Level with a few of the emerging schools offering National Certificate Level training. Constraints revolved around the perceived inability of youths with hearing impairment to handle theory required at higher levels of training of their spoken and written language deficiencies (Muwaniki & Muvirimi, 2017).

Rationalisation of the VET system was achieved by opening up of formerly whites only institutions.(Munetsi, 1996). The government embarked on VET policy reforms which managed to

produce large numbers of skilled graduates in Engineering and Agriculture. However, this did not translate into anticipated growth due to a mismatch between the skills the graduates possessed and the needs of the labour market (Dorsey, 1989; Munetsi, 1996; Zengeya, 2007). Significantly for youths with hearing impairment, the new government began to coordinate and manage their education in line with the move towards providing equal opportunities for all (Mpofu, Kasayira, Mhaka, Chireshe and Maunganidze, 2007; Peresuh and Barcham, 1998). Although a new school for children and youth with hearing impairment, Nzeve Deaf Centre, was established in 1981-, this was a private rather than government initiative. The institution started as a pre-school and evolved into a centre for deaf youths mainly because of its VET and Zimbabwean Sign Language (ZSL) training activities (*Ibid*). It is noteworthy that this institution pioneered the acceptance and official use of ZSL in VET but this does not seem to have generalised to the older schools which still insisted on using spoken, written languages.

During this period, Robert Mugabe's government earned Zimbabwe its status as "one of the most disability accessible countries in Africa" (Devlieger, 1998: 26) mainly through its disability-friendly public transportation policies and disability legislation (Mpofu & Harley, 2002) rather than vocational training for persons with disabilities. Through the Social Welfare Act (1981), people with disabilities were entitled to free public transport and a government disability allowance. Legislation was also passed to assert the right of people with disabilities to access public services such as education and training through the Disabled Persons Act (1992).

VET provision for hearing-impaired youths in the economic liberalisation era, 1991-1998

Zimbabwe adopted the policy of economic liberalization from 1991 at the instigation of the Bretton Woods institutions namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Chinyamunzore, 1995). Among other things, these institutions encouraged governments of developing countries to adjust their economies arguing that local currencies were overvalued. In the Zimbabwean

case, the program was named the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP). The program aimed at reducing government expenditure by instituting privatisation of most public enterprises, public sector reforms and reduced government participation in social services such as education and health (Kanyenze *et al.*, 2011; Nyazema, 2010).

Economic liberalisation led to the increase in demand for VET skills in Zimbabwe because most people who were retrenched from government needed to develop skills in order to participate in the informal sector. With limited government participation in social services, including VET, as part of liberalisation efforts, private sector provision of VET expanded because of the removal of registration restrictions (Bennell *et al.*, 1999).

Economic liberalisation through ESAP had conflicting consequences on VET provision for youths with hearing impairment in Zimbabwe. ESAP, however, had more negative consequences for the country than benefits. The majority of private colleges were more expensive than their government-subsidized counterparts and were therefore out of reach for ordinary hearing impaired youth. High tuition fees were out of reach for many students, leading to high dropout rates. The private schools in question cannot be blamed for charging the 'high' fees because these centres depended on the fees to meet their operational costs. During the ESAP period private funding for VET was affected and this led to poor VET provision as training institutions could no longer sustain investment in training facilities, infrastructure as well as human resource development (Kanyenze *et al.*, 2011; Nziramasanga, 1999). This partly resulted in the government instituting the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training in 1999 popularly referred to as the Nziramasanga Commission (Nziramasanga, 1999). VET for hearing-impaired youths was severely compromised during the ESAP period. Institutions offering VET to the people with disabilities generally were seriously affected such as Copota School for the blind in Masvingo Province, Danhiko Project in Harare and Jairos Jiri centres across the country. Their challenges ranged from infrastructural,

operational to human capital as a result of shortage of relevant skilled personnel.

The Education Act (1996), for example, asserted the right of every child in Zimbabwe to attend school, but it is contestable whether this was deliberately intended to benefit children with disabilities. One view is that youths with disabilities are first and foremost children so their right to school education is also entrenched in this law. This view, espoused by Muchemwa (2009) argued that even though the Act does not specify disability, the law prohibits discrimination in education on any grounds. He argued that such an interpretation is in accordance with Article 24 (1) of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) to which the Zimbabwean Government is a signatory. Article 24 (1) stipulated that the State Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, and that states shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels.

Another view is that because Section 4, Subsection 2 of the Education Act (1996) specifically listed grounds on which a child may not be refused entry and the list clearly omitted disability; this omission could therefore deny children with disabilities access to school education. Section 4, Subsection 2 stated: “No child in Zimbabwe shall be refused admission to any school on the grounds of race, tribe, colour, religion, creed, place of origin, political opinion or the social status of his parents”. Although the omission of disability from this list could be used as a loophole to deny children with disabilities access to school education, such denial would appear to be contrary to the education-for-all spirit of the law. This spirit was more explicitly captured in another piece of Zimbabwean legislation, the Disabled Persons Act (1996). This law expressly outlawed the denial of people with disabilities access to public premises, services and amenities in clear accordance with UNCRPD (2006). Section 8 of the Disabled Persons Act (1996) stated, “No disabled person shall on the ground of his disability alone be denied the provision of any service or amenity ordinarily provided to members of the public... .” If it is agreed that education is a service,

then this section (Section 7), the Disabled Persons Act (1996)also states:

Where premises, services or amenities (are considered) inaccessible to disabled persons by reason of any structural, physical, administrative or other impediment to such access, the provider of the service (may be required) to undertake such action as may be specified in order to secure reasonable access by disabled persons ...

This law safeguarded the right of people with disabilities to access public buildings, services and amenities and where these were considered inaccessible, service providers had the obligation to rectify. By implication, for example, people with physical disabilities who could not access public buildings which only had stairs, could take the owners of such buildings to court using this legislation in order to get the buildings altered.

Reference to ‘other impediments to access’ appears to be an open, catch-all phrase which can be used to the advantage of people with disabilities besides physical impairment. This phrase appears to allow wide interpretation which recognises not only physical and structural impediments to physical access but also various other impediments to accessing services such as instruction. Lotz-Sisitka (2009) and Morrow (2007) explained that access in education can be conceptualised as either formal, physical access or epistemological access. The legislation is not restricted to ensuring the right to formal or physical access but can also be interpreted as facilitating epistemological access as suggested by the phrase ‘other impediments to access’ in Section 7 of the Disabled Persons Act (1996). This interpretation of the law is supported by the policy document on *Providing Guidelines on Equal Access to Education for Learners with Disabilities* (Director, 2006b). The policy stipulated that children with disabilities be provided with disability-friendly facilities so that they are able to access instruction. Once they have physical access to schools, learners with disabilities need only to indicate how they are impeded from accessing knowledge in order to get redress from the law. Even though both the law and the policy do not mention specific

categories of disability, it is up to the people with various disabilities to determine the ways in which they are impeded from accessing particular services.

Youths with hearing impairment could employ this provision of the Disabled Persons Act (1996) to observe, as Marschark (2014) did, that no one will be helped by any one-size-fits-all approach to education for people with hearing impairment. The existing legislation could be used to argue that VET institutions which employ a one-size-fits-all approach to train youths with hearing impairment are impeding the epistemological access of these learners. It could be argued that reasonable access would only be possible if VET institutions made adjustments in their teaching. Adjustments could involve streaming the youths so that those who understand ZSL better could be taught using ZSL in a sign-bilingual approach, while those who would benefit from spoken language could be trained spoken and written language. Inappropriate teaching approaches could therefore be cited under the Disabled Persons Act (1996) as 'other impediments' to epistemological access while appropriate adjustments could be cited as disability-friendly under the policy *Providing Guidelines on Equal Access to Education for Learners with Disabilities*. The Disabled Persons Act (1996) and the Education Act (1996) complemented each other in asserting the right of formal and physical access to such services as education and also epistemological access through what Johnson *et al.* (1989) call linguistic access to the curriculum. Legislation enacted during the first decade of independence could therefore potentially facilitate epistemological access to a technical-vocational curriculum.

VET provision for hearing-impaired youths during the crisis period, 1999-2009

From 1999 to 2009, Zimbabwe experienced one of its worst crises (politically, economically and socially) in its post-independence history. Participation in the Democratic Republic of Congo war during the period 1998-2002, the payment of gratuities to veterans of the liberation struggle from an overstretched fiscus in 1998, and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) from 2000, are some

of the factors often associated with the economic decline in Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos & Phimister, 2004). Even though ESAP had been officially terminated in 1996, its negative effects on VET provision were still felt across the country (Saungweme, 2013).

The FTLRP programme resulted in the displacement of former white commercial farmers from their farms without compensation which were redistributed to the 'black' majority (Scoones *et al.*, 2011). The FTLRP seriously affected relations between Zimbabwe and Britain, its former colonial master. This resulted in Britain cutting diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe and the imposition of sanctions by most countries in Europe, Australia and America (Raftopoulos and Phimister, 2004). This resulted in economic sanctions being imposed on Zimbabwe. The sanctions meant that most companies of European and American origin had to relocate from Zimbabwe to neighbouring countries such as Zambia, South Africa and Mozambique (Muwaniki, 2018). This led to investor flight and company closures, ultimately leading to the shrinking of the Zimbabwean economy (Duri, 2016). Consequently, massive job losses ensued as well as reduced funding for VET training. The companies that continued operating reduced their spending on industrial training and this negatively impacted on VET provision for hearing-impaired youths (Muwaniki & Muvirimi, 2017).

The disputed elections of 2008, in which the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) got the majority of votes but not enough to be outright winners that resulted in a disputed runoff election, worsened the crisis situation in Zimbabwe. There was increased violence and the legitimacy of Mugabe's rule became markedly doubtful. The situation was characterised by unprecedented hyperinflation that reached 2.2 million percent in May 2008 (Gono, 2008). This period was christened the 'Casino Economy' by the then Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe due to the high risks and associated losses that were being incurred by corporates and individuals (Gono, 2008). The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (2013) acknowledged that Zimbabwe experienced deteriorating economic and social conditions since 2000 which led to the decline in the Gross Domestic Product by about

50% in 2008. Education during this period was no longer a priority for many people as their focus shifted to survival pursuits (Mareva, Gonye and Rubaya, 2013).

Post-secondary education institutions, including vocational training centres, lost qualified and experienced personnel during the massive brain drain that characterized the crisis period. Kanyenze *et al.* (2011) note that the brain drain resulted in acute depletion of skills, with Medicine, Applied Sciences and Engineering the worst affected. In universities, absconding constituted 52.7% while resignations constituted 41.1 % of staff losses (*Ibid*). Staff vacancy rates shot up to 73% in the country's universities (*Ibid*). The situation was not much different in Polytechnic Colleges and Vocational Training Centres (*Ibid*). In some cases, professionals engaged in survival strategies such as outmigration to neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana while others were preoccupied in various informal economic activities such as money exchange on the black market (Gukurume, 2015). The Zimbabwean economic crisis continued to rage on after the end of the GNU in 2013 which had managed to bring some stability to the economic problems that characterized the pre-GNU era (Vurayai and Muwaniki, 2016).

The GNU in 2009 initially brought hope to the social sectors of the country including health and education. However, as the economic, social and political landscape of Zimbabwe changed, this presented unique challenges in the sector, consequently reducing employment opportunities for youths with hearing impairments. Hearing-impaired youths, as well as others with various impairments, were routinely excluded from participation in social, political and economic lives of normal communities, through inadequate policy and standards, negative attitudes, lack of provision of services, lack of accessibility and inadequate funding (*Zimbabwe Human Rights Bulletin*, 2015). Their exclusion appeared to worsen by the day. Despite proclamations in legislation and policy, hearing-impaired youths became more vulnerable to increased exclusion and suffering in extraordinary, country-specific calamities such as Zimbabwe's hyperinflationary period. As Mareva, Gonye and Rubaya (2013) reported, education during this period was no longer a priority for

many people as their focus shifted to survival and Musengi (2014) found that enrolment in the special schools for learners with hearing impairment declined.

It is not coincidental that it was during this hyperinflationary period prior to the GNU that some of the special schools which had been established to exclusively cater for learners with hearing impairment started co-enrolling hearing learners alongside the dwindling numbers of those with hearing impairment. This practice which has been called 'reverse inclusion' continues but its effects on VET for youths with hearing impairment are yet to be documented. The practice may very well lead to a diversification of the VET curriculum in the schools as the hearing learners would be deemed to be capable of undertaking the theoretical components required at higher levels of study.

Possession of vocational skills alone did not improve the livelihoods of hearing-impaired youths in Zimbabwe. Youths with disabilities in Zimbabwe continued to face a plethora of challenges stemming from their impairments as well as from their interactions with society (Mugumbate & Mtetwa, 2014). Despite possessing vocational skills, challenges of negative potential employers have often hindered their access to employment. Vocationally trained hearing-impaired youths are often victims of labour market exclusion (Muwaniki & Muvirimi, 2017).

Various other government policies crafted post 2000 were supportive of VET. For example, the *Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools* (2002) indicates that children in all primary schools in Zimbabwe should be taught 'practical subjects' for a minimum of one hour per week in the first two grades, and a minimum of two hours per week from the third grade up to Grade Seven. These practical subjects are usually technical-vocational subjects aimed at providing learners with trade-related skills for their economic survival. Some schools might include such subjects as Art, Music and Physical Education as practical subjects but generally, subjects such as Agriculture, Carpentry and Sewing are considered practical subjects. The policy advocates that each school expand its technical-vocational curriculum to levels above the minimum requirements,

depending on its resources. Schools for learners with hearing impairment, which usually have more resources for technical subjects, have therefore, expanded their technical-vocational curriculum to more subjects than in mainstream schools. Tension is however evident between the mainstream academic curriculum, and a technical-vocational curriculum at the special schools for learners with hearing impairment. The expansion of the technical-vocational curriculum at the special schools tends to encroach on the time allotted for the rest of the academic curriculum. This means that learners with hearing impairment in Zimbabwe spend a lot more time than hearing peers learning trades such as carpentry. The technical-vocational curriculum on which these learners spent so much time was not part of the school-leaving public examination, which is academic. The dilemma is how to balance the schools' technical-vocational curriculum and the academic curriculum so that learners with hearing impairment can still be presented as viable candidates in the academic examinations. It is a dilemma reflecting a bigger contradiction between the medical model and a social model of disability.

VET for hearing impaired youths: Alternative directions post-Mugabe (2014 – 2018)

President Robert Mugabe resigned officially on 21 November 2017 after a bloodless military intervention code-named Operation Restore Legacy in which military tanks invaded the Capital Harare, in an unprecedented move since independence. Robert Mugabe resigned in the face of widespread popular demonstrations which had military support on one hand and on the other hand, legal impeachment through parliament. Prior to his resignation, Mugabe's rule had become rife with intra-party factionalism in the ruling ZANU-PF party. An ageing Robert Mugabe gradually lost touch with day to day government business, resulting in confusion in policy formulation, interpretation and implementation. This was most evident in contradictory investment guidelines. This chapter was written (during the transitional period) on the eve of the 2018 General Election whose leading contenders are Emmerson

Mnangagwa, Mugabe's predecessor from the ruling ZANU-PF party and Nelson Chamisa from the opposition MDC Alliance. Whatever the outcome of the election, the newly elected leader of Zimbabwe ought to address the rot inherited from the Mugabe presidency in education generally and particularly VET for hearing impaired youths. The Mugabe era has been marked by shifts in VET from a charity perspective guided by a medical model, through to integrated education, and finally to the current inclusive education era. In practice the current inclusive education era has much promise in theory but needs infrastructural supports in order to transform the ideal into reality.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed Robert Mugabe's conflicting VET legacy for hearing-impaired youths in Zimbabwe. The discussion covered the early years of independence, the ESAP era, and the crisis years from 1999 up to Mugabe's ouster from office in November 2017 which ended his 37 years rule as President of Zimbabwe. The chapter has shown that the first decade after independence was characterised by phenomenal growth in VET provision for hearing-impaired youths. During this period, a number of laws which support the empowerment of people with disabilities were enacted. This was also associated with massive financial investments in training of these youths by the government, private sector as well as non-governmental organisations. However, from the second decade until Mugabe's exit from power, VET for people with disabilities generally suffered neglect. Policies such as economic liberalisation and the FTLRP affected the performance of the Zimbabwean economy and led to economic sanctions which had ripple effects on the VET system. On the whole Robert Mugabe left a 'bitter-sweet' vocational legacy for the hearing impaired youths. On one hand he managed to democratise and deracialise VET provision, while on the other hand his macro-economic policies led to the unemployment of the hearing-impaired vocationally trained graduates.

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Violence, Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe: An Appraisal of Mugabe's Legacy through the Publications of Roman Catholic Church Organs in Zimbabwe

Edmore Dube

Introduction

This chapter examines the position of the Catholic Church's (hereinafter the Church) publications in safeguarding good governance and democracy in Zimbabwe. The chapter is informed by the understanding that periodic publications by the Church organs, especially the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Social Work (Silveira House), are reliable sources of events in Zimbabwe's history. Such historical documents, which have largely been (but not entirely) very critical of Robert Gabriel Mugabe's leadership styles, are in the public domain. These documents, clearly informed by the Church's pristine social concepts on human flourishing, transcend partisan analysis by being largely non-apologetic in their evaluation of Mugabe's often autocratic and self-serving leadership antics, despite him being a professed practising Catholic. These documents are replete with indications of Mugabe's centrality to the propagation of violence leading to a dearth of justice and peace among innocent citizens of Zimbabwe. Violations of justice and peace have been documented in relation to a variety of freedoms relating to religion, governance and economic advancement of ordinary Zimbabwean citizens.

With respect to religion, the Church was irked by the Socialist rhetoric of the 1980s and early 1990s, which was only upped whenever Mugabe's security in the top job was threatened by 'fair' competition. Governance issues have dominated the various Church

documents, accusing Mugabe of using excessive force against opponents resulting in wanton injuries and massive loss of lives. Opposition political parties, namely PF ZAPU and MDC dominate Catholic publications as bearers of the worst brunt of Mugabe's terror, resulting in the loss of at least twenty thousand lives of innocent civilians during *Gukurahundi* (erode chaff) and quite a few hundreds, during post-1999 elections, respectively. Economic problems are seen as being inextricably connected to the issues of misrule. The different Church publications, however, credit Mugabe with advances in education, while accusing the media and the international community for failing to rein him in at the earliest possible stages of his rule.

Historical Background

Mugabe came to power in 1980 through a popular vote following the country's bruising liberation war, popularly known as the Second Chimurenga, that was fought between Ian Douglas Smith's minority Rhodesia Front government and the indigenous liberation movements, including the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) that later on became known as the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) led by Ndabaningi Sithole and later by Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), later Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF ZAPU) led by Joshua Nkomo. Mugabe was upbeat following a 'welcome rally' in Highfields Harare held on 27 January 1980, which is reported to have attracted an ecstatic eulogising crowd numbering about a quarter of a million (*The Times* 31 January 1980). This public acknowledgement of his leadership was shortly authenticated by his landslide victory in the February 1980 election in which ZANU-PF took 57 out of 80 seats open for Blacks (Sadziwa 2016: 104). PF ZAPU took 20 seats and United African National Council (UANC) of Bishop Abel Tondekai Muzorewa took the remaining three seats (Sadziwa 2016: 105). Many people expected revenge, but Mugabe surprised the world by announcing political amnesty and reconciliation for the war belligerents. He stated that:

Henceforth you and I must strive to adapt ourselves, intellectually and spiritually to the reality of our political change and relate to each other as brothers bound one to the other by the bond of comradeship. If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you...The wrongs of the past must stand forgiven and forgotten (Raftopoulos 2005: x).

It was the espousal that “the wrongs of the past must stand forgiven and forgotten” that touched the hearts of many and quickly returned the once hostile foes to relative cordiality, though reconciliation was not without problems. The problems besetting this policy of reconciliation ranged from racial mistrust to political competition and ethnic factionalism (Tarusarira 2014: 93), stretching as far back as the split of ZAPU and formation of ZANU in 1963 (Mlambo 2014: 147). Its major problem stemmed from the fact that Prime Minister Robert Mugabe announced an unwritten policy of reconciliation in his acceptance speech (Mashingaidze 2010: 22), making it legally unbinding, with its success purely dependant on the benefactor’s good will. But despite its absence from enforceable statutory instruments, the policy of reconciliation resulted in jubilation, in anticipation of Mugabe’s enduring good will. Even in such times of jubilation and euphoria the Church sounded a lot of caution as communicated by the pre-nuptial publication by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC) as is discussed below.

Catholic Publications: A Glimpse of Mugabe’s Legacy

On the 17th of April 1980, a day before Zimbabwe’s independence was declared, the ZCBC published *Welcome Zimbabwe*, a pastoral⁸ letter pre-emptying the Church’s view of an independent

⁸ A pastoral letter is an informative Church document on the current affairs meant for the consumption of its grassroots members, as well as that of people of good will.

and free state. The document limited “the reason for setting up any political community” to “the *common good* of its people” as “the whole meaning of its existence” (ZCBC 1980: 6). In cautioning the Mugabe regime the Catholic Church used this very understanding of relating the state to the common good in a very constant manner (Dube2016). Any actions of the state contrary to the common good, presented crises points in the history of the nation provoking the Church into publishing critical pastoral documents (ZCBC 2007, 2011) addressing the roots of the crises, and proposing possible outlets beneficial to the voiceless masses. The Church did not, however, wait for crisis events to guide its national input, but she also provided guidance for celebrating achievements. Thus, the ZCBC inaugural letter, *Welcome Zimbabwe*, cautioned the citizens against excessive euphoria which would “entrust the state with disproportionate power” (ZCBC 1980:13). The Church knew the problems of the political elite wielding unmitigated power from the various world spots in which the Church had its presence. The Church was particularly wary of the various social injustices committed by dictators in Europe and Latin America leading the Magisterium of the Second Vatican Council to declare that justice and peace were the most pertinent problems besetting the world (Auret 1992). The generality of the Zimbabweans, however, were too absorbed by the euphoria of their hard won freedom to mind any caution by the Church, which subsequently became regrettable as the United Nations Habitat repertoire, Annah Tibaijuka, later discovered (Tibaijuka 2005).

The masses were prepared to give Mugabe unfettered power, as a reward for leading the struggle which resulted in the transformation of the political fortunes of black people. One cannot entirely blame them, for there was a further mitigant for their actions related to their academic achievements. Their horizon of world events had been severely limited by Ian Smith and his minority government. Smith’s government offered Blacks a ‘bottle-necked’ education system that excluded the majority of indigenous Zimbabweans, while affording the fortunate few education for low-paying blue collar jobs which limited their interaction with the world. Little did they know that the

Church was an informed wartime partner which implemented the Kairos⁹ Theology with dire consequences (Banana 1996: 12), resulting in the expulsion (by Smith's minority government) of nineteen missionaries including Bishop Lamont and the murder of twenty four other missionaries and one local priest (McLaughlin 1996:4). Banana (1996: 27) is clear that "the Roman Catholic's conscious attempt to engender a lasting spirit of racial tolerance was more than any other church of that time had the will or capacity to do."

Mugabe was, however, aware of the Church's contributions in the areas of publicity, assistance in cash and kind as well as health personnel in the refugee camps in Zambia and Mozambique, which led him to invite Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa of Harare Archdiocese to offer devotion at various state occasions including the inaugural independence celebrations of 18 April 1980. Mugabe stated categorically that:

The Catholic Church played a very significant role in the liberation struggle. Not that they fought with arms as we did; but they opposed racism and refused to be made an agent of the government in implementing racial policies. We valued the support which the Church gave us as it helped internationalise our grievance and helped to mobilise international support for us. Within the country it gave us a broader base than the one which we ourselves, acting entirely on our own, could have created (Randolph, 1985: 42).

Two years down the line, the ZCBC published another pastoral letter, *Our Way Forward* (1982), in which the Church observed that the new government had made certain advances which were, however, being watered down by a scourge in the security sector. In the first few pages (ZCBC1982:2-3), the Church praises Mugabe's government for the removal of all kinds of discrimination, for

⁹ Kairos refers to the moment of truth; the rightful time to make a fearless but constructive proclamation. Kairos Theology has its roots in South Africa as a proclamation against racist apartheid. See first Kairos Document South Africa (1985).

promotion of equitable distribution of wealth, promotion of basic social rights (health and education), improvement of working conditions, cooperation, brotherhood and the stress being placed on forgiveness and reconciliation. The Church acknowledged these common goods as being at the heart of the gospel of Christ. The pastoral letter maintained that “all the above-mentioned measures are highly praise-worthy achievements and correspond directly with Christian social teaching” (ZCBC 1982: 4). The document acknowledges the correctness of the new government’s vision on human advancement by reiterating, in paragraph thirteen, the observation of the Second Vatican Council that, “man is the source, the centre and purpose of all socio-economic life” (*Gaudium et Spes* 1965: 63). The statement was premised on the fact that economic barriers were being lifted and new opportunities for wealth-creation were being availed to “a larger percentage of the population” (ZCBC 1982: 13). The bishops (1990) devoted a whole CCJP volume, *A Decade of Development: Zimbabwe 1980-1990*, a document of 161 pages, to appraising Mugabe’s development agenda. The document describes Zimbabwe in the opening sentence as “a miracle of growth” (Auret 1990: 1). The new government had initiated cooperatives to better the people’s lives, and by 1989 the education sector enrolment had grown by 332% since independence (Ibid: 17). Health facilities for Africans had been highly improved to reverse the colonial legacy of concentrating such facilities in urban areas, the domain of whites. Water and sanitation had been tremendously improved by the influx of boreholes and protected wells in the communal areas. Blair toilets were on the rise (Ibid: 50), and on the farming front subsistence farmers increased their submission to the Grain Marketing Board from 6% in 1980 to 74% in 1989 (*Ibid*: 65). This was due to supply of inputs by government, advance in extension services and the development of new varieties for dry regions (Auret 1990: 93). The new government also addressed gender issues. The state was irked by the fact that “under customary law women remained minors for the duration of their lives” (*Ibid*: 105). Women like their male counterparts were, therefore, afforded free primary education and scholarships for higher and tertiary education

to overcome their situation. Such actions by the new regime were praiseworthy.

The bishops were, however, disturbed by Mugabe's failure to rein in his security forces working in the western provinces of the country. In a tacit reference to the disturbances in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces, the ZCBC (1982: 10) admonished against prior indemnification of security forces, because "to indemnify such acts in advance certainly encourages and condones injustice and violent denial of human rights." The reasoning was that once the security forces were indemnified prior to committing abuses against innocent civilians, they became free to act with absolute impunity. Contrary to the stance taken by the state by overlooking the atrocities committed by the security sector, the Church insisted through the pastoral letters that security forces who committed crimes should be brought to justice. Although the Church had access to Mugabe, the then Zimbabwe's executive Prime Minister and member of the Catholic fraternity, their request for the rule of law largely fell on deaf ears, which gradually strained the marriage between the Church and the state. The Church, however, did not tire in mobilising its various departments to stake its concept of good governance and democracy based on the respect for the human person and the common good.

The Church continued to stress through its ongoing catechetical formation for all Catholics that "torture which uses physical or moral violence to extract confession, punish the guilty, frighten opponents or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity" (*Catechism* 1994: 534). In fact, the Church took such acts as murder in its various levels, including psychological, physiological and spiritual. This catechetical interpretation was not obvious to some Roman Catholics, including Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's long time ruler. Although the Church was happy to associate with Mugabe right from the war times, it gradually began to find him guilty of failing to live up to his catechism pledge of respecting human dignity, which forms the bedrock of Catholic Social Teachings (Byron 1998). It was Mugabe's nefarious involvement with the *Gukurahundi* massacres in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions (LRF/CCJP1997: 1) which contravened the most sacred of the

Church's teachings regarding the inviolability of human life. The Church teaches that "human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God...who is its sole end" (*Catechism* 1994: 526). With an estimated loss of twenty thousand lives at the hands of the Korean trained Fifth Brigade controlled by Mugabe, Mugabe was largely viewed as a power-hungry anti-Ndebele politician set to eradicate contrary views by exterminating human beings advocating them (LRF/CCJP 1997). Such a view was caused by Mugabe's authorisation of excessive force to deal with the unrest in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands provinces, irrespective of whether the army was dealing with civilians or 'armed bandits.' The Church condemned unreservedly the "wanton killings, woundings, beatings, burnings and rapings" committed by the fifth Brigade (ZCBC 1983: 7). What is worse is that even with numerous researches concluding that the state was guilty of the 1982-87 atrocities (Martin, 2006; LRF/CCJP 1997), Mugabe has refused to apologise save to say that the atrocities were committed in a 'state of madness' (Murambadoro, 2015). This 'state of madness' has left several people missing for more than thirty years (up to 2018) without being declared dead as required by the law. Declaration of missing persons as dead enables close relatives to access death certificates, and, generally allows for closure. Obtaining of death certificates by the affected families would help in their accessing of national registration and the finalisation of disposal of deceased estates. Due to Mugabe and the ZANU-PF intransigency, those who lost their relatives or livelihoods through 'killings' and 'beatings' were never compensated (Teute 2015). Mugabe remained in denial which has grossly affected his attempts at 'national reconciliation' with the other war belligerents.

Mugabe spurned any chances for reconciling with the regions affected by *Gukurahundi*. In fact his actions undid his initial assertion that "the wrongs of the past must stand forgiven and forgotten" (Raftopoulos 2005: x). He revived his war-time misunderstandings with PF ZAPU leading to the suffering of the majority of the people in the regions dominated by PF ZAPU, who paid the prize for PF ZAPU's refusal to take up a subordinate political role in the

administration of the state in relation to Mugabe's ZANU-PF. Raftopoulos (2005: xi) contends that ZANU-PF's political reconciliation was never pursued for its own sake, but was intended as a philosophy for the subordination of both opposition political parties and civil society. The skin-deep reconciliation was only tenable as long as Mugabe was secure at the helm of Zimbabwe's political echelon. The negation of this interpretation of political reconciliation was exacerbated by the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Richard Tsvangirai, which combined efforts with the civil society to defeat the government in the referendum of February 2000. This defeat was followed by widespread farm invasions, to punish the white farmers for 'delving in politics' by opposing the Referendum in conjunction with the MDC. This action led to the revival of the war-time acrimonious relationship with Whites. The state received "widespread condemnation as a result of the ruling party's repudiation of this reconciliation politics" (Raftopoulos 2005: viii). The ZCBC was consistent in rejecting a system where the racial grain determined relationships, entitlements and people's development (see for example, ZCBC 2007).

When the Church, through its pastoral letters (ZCBC 1982) and the CCJP publications upped its criticism of Mugabe's seemingly autocratic tendencies, he threatened the Church with the revival of the war-time Marxist rhetoric. The Church responded by publishing *Socialism and the Gospel of Christ* on the first of January 1984. It was clearly disillusioned by Mugabe's threat to advance a non-theistic type of Marxism and to reorganise society by force. The Church was not worried about the egalitarian aspects of communism, which were not necessarily atheistic. What was worrisome was the introduction of a non-theistic Marxism as a political gimmick intended to muzzle the Church. The idea was meant to appear as though ZANU-PF was simply fulfilling the outstanding values of the Second Chimurenga, which thrived on Marxism-communist ideas.

The electioneering of 1985 worsened the already bad situation. ZANU-PF wished to wrestle all the parliamentary seats originally won by PF ZAPU in the 1980 plebiscite. To achieve this, Mugabe

allowed the youths to rampage ZANU-PF opponents and ‘seeming opponents,’ in addition to the Fifth Brigade already loose in the targeted provinces with PF ZAPU support base. These provinces included Matabeleland North and South, as well as the Midlands which had a large Ndebele minority (Tarusarira 2014: 94; Benyera 2014: 139). The ZCBC responded to these atrocities with the publication of *Peace and Unity and Freedom* (1985). Bishops deplored the punitive activities of the youth on the real and imagined enemies, worsened by the selective application of the law, which tilted legal outcomes in favour of ZANU-PF (ZCBC 1985; Huyse 2003). The youths knew that they were safe as long as they committed the atrocities in the name of “the [Mugabe’s] party” (ZCBC 1985: 1, 6). In its response to the Mugabe launched atrocities, the Church’s pastoral letter criticised the divisive ruling party slogan, “down with so and so!” as a source of hatred and resentment (ZCBC 1985:1, 6). ZANU-PF put a clear division between those promoted by the slogan “forward with so and so!” and those attracting its negation ‘down with so and so!’ These were seen as diametrically opposed with the former deserving a reward and the latter deserving death – a negation of the sanctity of life which all humanity owe to God. By endangering life, ZANU-PF theologically put itself in the place of God, who alone is entitled to give and subsequently take away earthly life in anticipation for a new life in the wake of resurrection (*Catechism*1994: 526).

In section three of the same pastoral letter, the bishops stressed that they were “deeply saddened by the suffering of many people and the senseless loss of life caused by disunity, hatred and ruthless hunger for power” (ZCBC, 1985:3). This was in sync with Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2009) observations that the Mugabe regime was guilty of ruthlessness and hunger for power, through its uncouth means of hanging on to power through violence unto death. The CCJP was particularly irked by the Mugabe’s lack of logic in implementing the draconian emergency laws crafted in the time of Ian Smith to purge his own people. The CCJP noted with great concern that,

the Emergency Powers were used extensively by the Rhodesian regime. *Regrettably*, after independence it was felt necessary to continue to make use of these extraordinary powers, some of the most drastic of which are the Emergency Powers (Maintenance of Law and Order) Regulations, 1983 (CCJP 1988: *Foreword*).

With these powers, police officers could detain a suspect for up to thirty days without resort to a court of law; and could extend that period indefinitely using ministerial, and not court authority. The CCJP saw the application of these draconian laws as intended to eliminate the contribution of those easily intimidated by Mugabe's leadership style, which fell short of the CCJP's dictum: "if you want peace work for justice." The Church found Mugabe wanting with regard to both peace and justice, since he spurned justice by implementing draconian laws, and peace by authorising use of excessive force by the Fifth and Youth Brigades. Mugabe was more comfortable with the enactment of such punitive laws as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (2002) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPA) (2004), to effectively intimidate and "muzzle the independent media and the freedom of expression" in complete disregard of the Church's call for moderation (Gundani 2008: 23). The Church made "justice an integral and constitutive element of Christian mission" through the advocacy of its justice commission (Gundani 2005: 172). For that reason, the CCJP published *Crisis of Governance* (2001) in Zimbabwe, which detailed political violence which utilised torture and murder of MDC political competitors, and white farmers who sided with the MDC in their bid to democratise the political space. The Fast Track Land Reform was jeopardised by its connection with this crisis of governance which made it life threatening to democratic forces premised on moderation (Muchena 2005). As a result, anyone calling for moderation belonged to the enemy camp 'sponsored by the West to cause regime change,' in order to install a puppet government run by the MDC. This 'regime change' rhetoric formed the central narrative which nurtured the *crisis of governance*, abhorred by both the Church and the democratic forces.

The Church came into the open on Mugabe's wanton love for power which made his government sardonic to the suffering of the people. His incessant concern with power contradicted *The Zimbabwe We Want* (ZCBC, ZFZ & ZCC 2006), which sought to create democratic space for all citizens. The Catholic Church worked with the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches to produce *The Zimbabwe We Want* as a blue-print or road map to recovery and democracy. Mugabe scoffed at the offer as a front for the West-backed regime change agenda. 'Regime change' or attempts at his life, formed his central rhetoric right from the 1980s, as a mechanism for keeping at bay all attempts to moderate him. As Muchena (2005: 267) posited, to disrupt any meaningful united front by the churches, Mugabe's government:

has been trying to play off one group of churches against another. To achieve this, it relies on a select group of church leaders who 'see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil.' These are paraded on the government muzzled radio and television and at press and state functions as representing the [authentic] voice of the Church.

A case in point is that of Nolbert Kunonga, the disposed Anglican Bishop of Harare (Dube and Chiyadzwa 2013), who "openly stated that he was a proud recipient of land through the government Land Reform Program and openly supported ZANU-PF" (Muchechetere, 2009: 14), and Prophet Andrew Wutawunashe who formed "Faith For the Nation" that "articulated the policies of ZANU (PF) and openly opposed, even in the media any church leadership that sought to sanction the ruling party and government as in the June 2008 elections" (Muchechetere, 2009: 14). *The Herald* quotes Kunonga as saying in his inaugural speech as Bishop in May 2001:

You are sick to think that the Western political and economic interests are your interests...Is interest in human rights in Zimbabwe not a tactical self-defence mechanism against the grabbing of the land by the government? We live in a sick country. It is a neurotic nation

where the young Africans are losing national identity, sense of history, African feeling and self-pride (Zvayi 2005).

Kunonga, in particular, needed state support to remain at the helm of the Anglican Diocese of Harare, in contravention of the rules and regulations of the Anglican Synod of Central Africa to which the Diocese of Harare was answerable. He survived for some time with the politicised courts issuing verdicts in his favour, since he was a professed ZANU-PF supporter and a coveted high profile figure eulogising the Third Chimurenga (wrestling St. Marnock's farm for himself), and venerating Mugabe as "an agent of God" (Gunda 2008: 300). Kunonga would utter pro-Mugabe statements from the pulpit (*Ibid*: 299), which earned him state backing including wide coverage by *The Herald* and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (*Ibid*: 302).

The government policy of divide and rule sent shivers in the Church ranks with the result that "except for the role of the ZCBC and its work in Matabeleland, and the CCJP's advocacy role following the Matabeleland massacres, the Church's attention was focused on non-political issues" (Muchena 2005: 260). The Catholic Church courageously went ahead with the publication of *Breaking the Silence: Building the True Peace* (1997), in conjunction with the Legal Resources Foundation despite serious threats from the Zimbabwe government led by Mugabe. In this particular publication by the CCJP, the Church detailed the atrocities committed by the Fifth Brigade at the behest of the state. It called upon the state to acknowledge its part in the massacres to allow for the healing and reconciliation of the nation-state. It advocated against any near repeat of the disturbances as a way of improving the country's democracy and allowing the nation to move on. Chibango (forthcoming) sees Mugabe as a perfectionist in functional violence which gravely 'wounded' our nation currently in need of healing. Chibango further perceives of the various pastoral letters by the Roman Catholic Church fathers as meant to heal the broken hearts of recipients of violence, with the express aim of creating new life-giving synergies.

Furthermore, the Catholic bishops remained poised against the negation of the common good for the sake of power retention by

Mugabe and his minority political elite. In August 2004, for example, the bishops reflected on the credibility of the 2000 and 2002 general elections which they found heavily flawed. They condemned them Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party for perpetrating violence arguing thus, “the way elections have been conducted in our country since 2000 has been controversial and marked by serious violence” (ZCBC 2004: 1). They challenged the legitimacy of the then Robert Mugabe as President of Zimbabwe by exposing the discrepancies in the plebiscites which brought him to power. The pastoral letter elucidates persuasively on the political turmoil of the period following the loss of the referendum and the instrumentalisation of *jambanja* (violence and turmoil) to retain ZANU-PF in power. The *jambanja* which accompanied both the plebiscites and the fast track land reform, code-named as the Third Chimurenga (third liberation war), which ran concurrently, was a “disciplinary and exclusionary device” (Sachikonye 2005: 12). The larger wrath of *jambanja* fell on the white farmers and supporters and leaders of the MDC who were severely tortured for daring to challenge Mugabe in the crucial parliamentary and presidential plebiscites (Dube 2018). Most of those tortured were forced to profess either illiteracy or blindness during the process of casting ballots so that the politicised members of the security could mark for them in the spaces designated for ZANU-PF candidates. Those who dared resist the voting procedure for opposition suspects were severely affected by “Operation *Wavhotera Papi* (Operation for whom did you vote), through which those accused of having voted ‘wrongly’ received retribution and were expected to confess and convert to the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)” (Tarusarira 2014: 94-5). Operation *Wavhotera Papi* was such a traumatising experience which was administered on competitors by ZANU-PF (Sadomba 2011: 229). This operation was tenable mainly during the crunch presidential election of 2002, which pitted Robert Mugabe with the late popular former trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai, and the presidential run-off of 2008 in which the latter was leading the former from the first round. Many civil servants including heads of institutions complied with the demanded procedure, in order to exonerate themselves from

being labelled supporters of the MDC, to save their lives. Such victims regained their competences immediately after surrendering their voting secrecy, in contravention of their constitutional rights to secret balloting.

The Church, however, remained resolute that the electorate should take courage and vote for people who respected human dignity (ZCBC 2000: 2), since “violence, intimidation and threats are tools of failed politicians” (ZCBC 2001: 1). The ZCBC (June, 2000) gave clear election guidelines aptly summarised in the pastoral letter entitled: *Use Your Vote, it is Your Right*. For the first time in Zimbabwe’s post-independent history, Zimbabweans took courage and voted for the MDC, which foiled the traditional ZANU-PF two thirds parliamentary majority, to the great chagrin of the ruling party. When severe acrimony between ZANU-PF and MDC continued long after the conclusion of the election, the bishops were compelled to come up with another pastoral letter before the end of the same year to try and impart forcefully the fact that there was life after an election. The ZCBC (November, 2000) communicated this message through the pastoral letter of encouragement entitled: *Working Together after the elections*. Victimisation emanating from the sardonic exuberance of *jambanja*, however, intensified as long as Mugabe was not assured of a foregone victory (Dube 2018: 23-29). Even those within his own [political] party who dared to offer a contrary opinion no matter how wise, were not spared, which prompted the Church to make a more direct appeal to the executive to reconsider its policies. Senior politicians like Dzikamai Mavhaire, Dumiso Dabengwa and Simba Makoni fell out of the leader’s favour for daring Mugabe. The same fate befell the architects of the ‘Tsholotsho Declaration,’ including Jonathan Moyo, Josiah Hungwe and six other provincial leaders, for preferring Emmerson Munangagwa for vice-presidency against Joyce Mujuru as was preferred by Mugabe.

The Church was shocked by the implementation of Mugabe’s ill-conceived *Operation Murambatsvina* (Operation Restore Order) of 2005 meant to punish the urban voters for advancing MDC politics ahead of those of the ruling ZANU-PF (Tibaijuka 2005). Many dwellings were destroyed on the pretext of them being illegal slumps.

The Church continued to name and publish the source of the *crisis of governance* that caused untold suffering among the lower classes. Nowhere was the Church as clear as in the 2007 pastoral letter titled: *God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed*, which courted the ire of the state to terrorise those who read or oversaw the reading of the letter in the churches and cathedrals nationwide. Arch Bishop Emeritus, Pius Ncube of the Bulawayo Archdiocese was pursued by state agents until he resigned from leading the Bulawayo Church.

God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed (2007) was the most fervent appeal by the ZCBC to the Head of State to address human suffering. Drawing from the Pharaoh-Moses nexus, it reminded Mugabe and his regime more clearly than ever before that God would inevitably intervene on the people's behalf. In this pastoral letter, the bishops shared the disillusionment of the masses with regards to ZANU-PF governance. The political dictatorship was squarely blamed for the economic meltdown which sent millions into the diaspora. The pastoral letter built onto the *Zimbabwe We Want* (2006), which sought to recreate the new society based on democratic principles to achieve the common good. It sought to democratise a system that the bishops viewed as more autocratic than the Smith colonial regime. The bishops stated succinctly that:

Despite the rhetoric of a glorious socialist revolution brought about by the armed struggle, the colonial structures and institutions of pre-independent Zimbabwe continue to persist in our society. None of the unjust and oppressive security laws of the Rhodesian state have been repealed; in fact, they have been reinforced by even more repressive legislation, the *Public Order and Security Act* and the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, in particular (ZCBC 2007: 3).

The abuse of human rights led to the rejection of Mugabe and his ZANU-PF in the 2008 plebiscite whose level of violence was condemned by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the international world at large. This forced ZANU-PF into a Government of National Unity (GNU) of 2009-2013. The Catholic Church responded by adopting a CCJP

(2008) report entitled *Graveyard Governance: A Report on Political Violence Following the March Harmonised 2008 Elections*. Just as in the pastoral letter entitled *God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed* (2007), the Church reiterated that the national problems besetting the nation emanated from a “graveyard governance” style that preferred taking away the life of a competitor as the best option. Those who were lucky to get away with their lives sometimes got away with “long-sleeves or short sleeves,” terminology used to describe whether victims lost their limbs from the upper or lower arm (Gorongu 2014: 1). The CCJP saw such actions as completely inhumane and devoid of the Social Teachings of the Church (STC). The STC stressed sanctity of life, that “every human being is a person” (*Social Teaching* 1979: 7), and worth all the respect befitting the *imago Dei* (image of God). However, to the great chagrin of the Church (ZCBC 2007: 3) “policemen and soldiers assault and beat peaceful, unarmed demonstrators and torture detainees. This is the unacceptable reality on the ground, which shows much disrespect for human life and falls far below the dignity of both the perpetrator and the victim.” In this case, the Church remained focused on a good political community centred on the common good, by condemning the current regime obstructing justice in the strongest possible terms.

In *Let us Work for the Common Good: Let us Help our Country* (2011: 5), the ZCBC still found Mugabe guilty of monopolising the Chimurenga Discourse for his own end. The pastoral letter maintained that it was unfortunate for the ruling party as a group of people to believe or advocate that they were solely responsible for bringing down the enemy and in ushering the independence of Zimbabwe. The truth was that the armed and the civilian, the internal and the external, the national and the international had pulled together a complexity of resources to win the liberation war which ushered in independence in 1980. In that regard, the ZCBC stressed that political leadership should not be a preserve for one part; the war veterans drawn from the armed and the external. This came in the wake of the Government of National Unity formed between ZANU-PF and two MDC formations (2009-2013), which ZANU-PF disregarded with impunity citing its so-called superior part in the

liberation struggle. There was continued rhetoric that the service chiefs could only salute those with war credentials, a statement referring to ex-freedom fighters and their erstwhile leadership. Army generals, Vitalis Zvinavashe (2002), Constantino Chiwenga and Douglas Nyikayaramba (2008) went public about this matter. Zvinavashe is quoted as saying:

To this end, let it be known that the highest office of the land is a 'strait jacket' whose occupant is expected to observe the objectives of the liberation struggle. We will therefore not accept let alone salute anyone with a different agenda that threatens the very existence of our sovereignty (*Zimbabwe Independent* 11 January 2002).

This essentially meant that ZANU-PF should rule forever because of its war legacy. The Church disputed such an interested interpretation of participation in the liberation struggle skewed towards keeping one party, with one man at its helm, in power. In fact, for the ZCBC, the interpretation giving one party the right to rule was a negation of the common good, for it was seen as divisive and self-interested. In Section 7.1 of the same pastoral letter (2011), the bishops observed that the government allowed the selective application of the law, which made securocrats partisan by promoting ZANU PF interests only. This brought the Catholic Church on a collision course with the corrupt post-independence government of Robert Mugabe, who ruled Zimbabwe from 1980 to November 2017, before being deposed by the military (Dube forthcoming). The Church, however, saw some good emanating from the GNU. The CCJP (2013: 2) complemented the GNU because ZANU-PF and MDC were "talking to each other" for the first time, which the Church hoped could heal the rift between the two political formations for the good of the masses.

Finally, the ZCBC (2017: 1) collaborated with other Christian denominations in condemning the Mugabe regime for "abrasive and exclusionary politics, characterised by increased use of ethnic identities that was now dominating the public discourse." The document takes opportunity to note that the military takeover which

set Mugabe aside was a *Kairos* (opportune) moment, a beckoning opportunity for restoring human dignity through the recreation of state institutions (legislature, judiciary, executive) to their expected operations. The pastoral message painted the Mugabe era, as a period in which institutions were deliberately run down in order to advantage the powerful by deliberately creating a begging community easy to control.

Conclusion

The foregoing has demonstrated that Mugabe and his former party, ZANU-PF, employed violence to attain as well as hold on to power, throughout Mugabe's more than thirty seven years in power (Sachikonye 2011). The violence which started as mainly confined to Matabeleland North and South as well as the Midlands provinces dominated by PF-ZAPU, gradually grew in intensity and coverage engulfing the whole nation, with the MDC and white farmers as its new targets, especially in the new millennium. The Church organs have been on hand to name and publicise the source of violence, so that in redressing the situation, people avoid addressing symptoms which do not help the situation. The Church publications, especially those by the CCJP, demonstrate a lot of courage on the part of church leadership, which remained seized with governance issues throughout Mugabe's long rule. The Church gave a categorical "No to power through violence, oppression and intimidation" (ZCBC 2007: 26). The Church advocacy through the CCJP showed that "violence, oppression and intimidation" were bad parameters for setting up political communities, because communities born in such a manner would inevitably lead to a dearth of justice and peace. In the final analysis, this study has underlined the importance of the Catholic Church publications in safeguarding good governance and democracy. It has shown that the Church is ready to celebrate (national achievements) with the masses as well as fight for or with them during their hard times. The Church publications provide guidance out of the challenges humanity finds itself in, in order to extricate the troubled so that they reach their full potential. This can

best be achieved in a democracy formulated around the principles of respect for human dignity and the common good, which are not limited by race or ethnicity.

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More than Three Decades of Deprivation and Impoverishment: The growth of the informal Sector during the Mugabe Era in Zimbabwe

Angeline Sithole & Tasara Muguti

Introduction

This chapter seeks to unpack how Robert Gabriel Mugabe's domestic policies led to the informalisation of the Zimbabwean economy. While the chapter broadly focuses on the informal sector during the Mugabe era, it particularly uses Highfields as its case study. Mugabe was the Zimbabwean leader since the country attained its independence from the British in 1980 until November 2017 when he was unceremoniously ousted from power by the military in a 'soft coup' code named 'Operation Restore Legacy'. The chapter explores how the deteriorating socio-economic and political situation under his long reign, particularly after the year 2000 forced a significant number of people, especially the formally unemployed in Zimbabwe's urban areas, including Highfields to participate and depend more and more on the informal sector. The chapter demonstrates how the participation of people in the informal sector has impacted on household livelihoods in terms of food security, income generation, level and quality of education, assets, health care and standards of living in Highfields.

Over the past three decades, between the 1990s and 2018, Zimbabwe faced severe economic challenges with significant impact on the livelihoods of the general populace. Several factors contributed to these economic challenges and these have included poor management of the national economy by the ruling Zimbabwe National African Union Party–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the adoption of disastrous neo-liberal economic policies in post-independent Zimbabwe, and a poorly planned and executed land

reform programme (Mlambo, 2008, Muguti, 2016). Additionally, an ill-conceived and incoherent foreign and domestic policy by the then Zimbabwean President, Robert Gabriel Mugabe over the three decades; participation in an expensive war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, corruption, massive brain drain, unprecedented inflation which broke world records are often alluded to as the major contributors to the socio-economic demise of the country (Raftopolous, 2009).

Company closures were also very common in the country resulting in high levels of unemployment; brain drain and a sharp drop in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with negative impact on the lives of the people (Tevera, 2010). While various arguments exist as to the reasons why people were propelled into informal economic activities, there is no doubt that in Zimbabwe, former President Robert Mugabe's skewed and failed economic initiatives catapulted the rank and file of Zimbabweans into this sector. According to Chen (2006: 29) there is widespread recognition that "informal employment tends to expand during economic crises or downturns, suggesting that necessity... in addition to choice...drives informality". Some writers such as Williams (2007: 239) argue that it is imperative to transcend both the conventional depictions of the motives of those in the informal economy as "necessity-driven" and the emergent "depiction of them as opportunity-driven...Rather, their motives should be seen as both concurrently necessity and opportunity driven". The growth of informality has also been seen as a core feature of "contemporary economic growth" and the global economy.

The dire economic situation in Zimbabwe at the turn of the 21st century pushed many people into the informal sector for livelihood sustenance. The rapid growth of the informal sector attributable to the shrinking of the formal economy in the last three decade made the informal sector to become the main employer as many people were rendered jobless and therefore fighting for survival. As the Zimbabwean economy continued to shrink, the informal economy became the main alternative employer and accommodated millions

of Zimbabweans in providing sources of income and forms of livelihood sustenance.

The chapter is basically an ethnographic version of some of the informal activities that have been predominantly characteristic of Highfields high density suburb since the late 1990s. Data was obtained freely from participants who had been involved in informal activities in the high density suburb. Since both researchers resided in Highfields, it was easy for us to get information from the research participants in view of the fact that some of them were known to us. We also employed participant observation as we dissected the research area and acquitted ourselves with the informal activities carried out in Highfields. Furthermore, secondary sources were used to provide a theoretical grounding for the study and to tackle technical issues related to this study. Some newspaper articles also catered for some key issues related to the study. The chapter concludes by paying particular attention to the challenges and opportunities created to the Zimbabweans as they participated in the informal sector during the Mugabe era.

Location and brief history of Highfields

Highfields (affectionately referred to as *Fio* in local lingo) is the second oldest high density suburb after Mbare in Harare. Highfields is located in South West Harare, bordered by Glen Norah (formally Baxter Farm) to the South West, Waterfalls to the South East, Willowvale and Southerton spanning North East to North West (Scarnecchia, 1990). It was built to accommodate African migrant workers in colonial Zimbabwe. Several respondents highlighted that the high density suburb is of historical, cultural and political significance in the Zimbabwean context as it produced and nurtured some of the most prominent nationalists who were to lead in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle against the Rhodesian colonial minority regime during the Second Chimurenga of the 1970s.

Highfields has remained a poor suburb even after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. Rather than investing in Highfields, most of its successful residents moved out of the area at independence. It also

remained a primary destination for rural to urban migrants, who found it easier to pay for accommodation and commute to work (Kileff, 1999). Many migrants are also attracted by the easier opportunities to start up home businesses and small scale industries at Machipisa and Gazaland Home Industry areas. The area thus remains heavily populated, with high unemployment at least formally. Highfields is divided into several zones, the primary zone being Old Highfields (established in the 1930s) and New Highfields. New Highfields was established in 1956 and comprises Lusaka (named after the Zambian capital), a testimony to a significant part of its population who are of Zambian and Malawian origin; Egypt, Jerusalem and Canaan named after Biblical places; Engineering; Cherima (Dark Zone) Zororo (place of rest); and Western Triangle which literary forms a triangle to the west where Highfield borders with Glen Norah and Glen View (Stopforth, 1977). The newest area of Highfields is Paradise which was established in 1996 and which is located at the southern end and borders Lusaka; it connects Highfields to nearby Glen Norah suburb to the South and part of it is in Glen Norah.

Characteristics of an informal sector

An informal sector is a group of activities that are done ‘illegally’, in the sense that they do not comply with economic regulations pertaining to fiscal, employment, health and other related matters (Bromley, 1978). According to Lindile and Ndaveni (2013), women and girls characterise the poorest group of workers in the sector. This is due to the fact that poverty is high among women than men whereby the majority of them are youths especially the uneducated who find it difficult to secure formal jobs. The informal operators are characterised as being poor since they earn irregular income. In most cases, their businesses flourish during civil servants’ pay days (Ndaveni, 2013).

According to Tibaijuka (2005), like any other developing country with a poor economy, the Zimbabwean informal economy has proliferated with the intensification and persistent economic crisis.

At independence in 1980, the informal economy only absorbed 10% of the labour force in the urban areas. Because of harsh economic conditions nearly 3 million people were earning a living through the informal economy (Mhone, 1996; Tibaijuka, 2005). After independence in Zimbabwe, there was a progressive rise in the informal sector triggered by the deregulation of some laws, the stagnation and decline in the economy. Informal employment rate rose to 20% in 1986/7, 27% in 1991 and an estimate of 40% in 2004 (Tibaijuka, 2005).

By 2005, the informal economy had effectively become the main source of income for most Zimbabweans (Mhone, 2008). During the last two decades, there has been an imbalance between the formal and the informal sectors. Jobs in the formal economy have grown negatively while jobs in the informal economy such as small businesses, vendors and illegal trade operations grew progressively (Shinder, 2016). The Southern African Migration Project [SAMP] (2016) notes that the parallel market, which is a combination of the black market and informal trade, has become the driving force of the Zimbabwean economy. As highlighted above, the shrinking formal market was due to Mugabe's policy inconsistencies which significantly provided fertile ground for the growth and expansion of the informal economy in the country. Indeed, the Zimbabwean formal economy shrunk because of reduced productivity in industries, agriculture, shortages in foreign currency and decline in investments (SAMP, 2016).

According to Kwesu, an economist at the University of Zimbabwe:

...the parallel economy now underpins Zimbabwe's survival. The black market in particular has been flourishing over the years, and this has been made possible by the ever-shrinking formal market...Informal trade and the black market have been growing, owing to the economic problems the country has been facing for a number of years now. It has been easy for the two to take root; because they normally do not require a lot of money to start and they can easily be managed (SAMP, 2016: 11).

Some scholarly reviews specify low level of education as a characteristic of the informal sector (Becker, 2004). According to Becker (2004), informal workers have lower levels of education and rates of literacy compared to those in the formal sector. This reflects that poor human capital increases the probability of participation in the informal sector. In Zimbabwe, the informal sector rose due to economic hardships and lack of formal jobs as a result of closure of many industries. Contrary to Becker's (2004) view that the informal sector is generally dominated by the uneducated people, in Zimbabwe, the educated people also ventured (and indeed continue to venture) into the informal activities during the Zimbabwean crisis as there was nothing left for them in formal employment (Ndaveni, 2013). The informal operators generally work for long hours and employment conditions are characterised by lack of decent work conditions. They occupy any desired open spaces where there is proximity to customers. Under normal circumstances, the wages or returns in the informal sector are normally low compared with those offered in the formal segment of the economy (Mkandawira, 1985).

The informal sector is characterised by easy entry. Ndoro (1996), for example, notes that easy entry means anyone who wishes to join can find some sort of work which will result in cash earnings. Most of their premises are informal and the rentals are very low, with some traders evading rentals (or taxes) at all. Moyo (1984) also argues that the informal sector is easy to venture into as it has low entry requirements. In addition to the above, the use of simple and inexpensive technology and less technologies means that the informal sector creates employment cheaply compared to the formal sector. In this regard, equipment is usually very simple and resources are acquired from various sources sometimes new, second hand and self-constructed. Mkandawira (1985) adds that the informal sector is associated with working collectively. The operations are normally on a small scale with few workers sharing ideas and resources. The operations are typically family owned and do not have fixed working hours. For instance, the study showed that, a mother can be a hairdresser and the father could be a barber whilst their children could be vending at the market commonly known as *musika*. The

informal traders usually set their cabin working collectively till late so as to earn more. This was more ubiquitous in the Lusaka, Egypt and Jerusalem suburbs of Highfields.

Despite diversity in the informal sector, there is one common factor among those engaged. The informal economy lacks economic security and legal protection (Chen, *et al*, 2004). Most informal workers are deprived of secure work, benefits for workers such as pension fund and medical aid, social protection and representation or voice. The business flourishes depending on the availability of the owner. If an individual got ill then there is no income, thereby worsening the situation (*Ibid*). This is witnessed by one respondent who purported that; ‘Our work has no rest or excuse because no one relieves you, your absence simply means no income’ (Interview with Mrs. Mahoso, Lusaka Resident, Machipisa, 30/01/2018). Other disadvantages and challenges confronted by the informal economy include competition from larger formal firms in production and capital markets and for the self-employed the employers have to take care of themselves their enterprise and their workers (Chen, *et al*, 2004).

The neo-liberal economic project of the 1990s and the informalisation of the economy

In Zimbabwe, the economic reform in the 1990s was largely driven by the vested interests of the global financial institutions which triggered a massive economic collapse, worsened in later years by other local factors. At independence in 1980, the post-colonial government inherited a privatised economy, structured in a way that only a minority benefited from the opportunities that accrued from the economy. It was in the above context that Mugabe’s new government tried to open up the economy to the majority of the indigenous people during the early years of independence. However, Mugabe’s massive social and economic reforms of the 1980s, coupled with rampant corruption by his cronies had a devastating effect on the economy. Mugabe’s government responded to the economic decline by implementing the ESAP during the 1990s, with the

intention of reversing this downward spiral. However, ESAP which was put in place to boost the country's economy and to foster private sector investment saw the further plummeting of the economy and the cutting of wages. Three decades later, the country's socio-economic crisis can be attributed to the government's response to the 1990s strain, when Zimbabwe faced severe droughts, a decline in productivity and shrinking tax revenues. Apart from this, a dreadful picture was painted when the country's unemployment rate reached 40% by the end of the 1990s, as compared to 10% in 1980 (Freeman, 2005).

At that time, the economic restructuring was meant to recoup some of the money pumped into Zimbabwe by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank after independence and to also "resuscitate" the ailing Zimbabwean economy. Some of the money owed, however, did date back to the days of the settler colonial government. The restructuring triggered economic collapse in Zimbabwe and set an inauspicious precedent for what has over the years come to be known as the Zimbabwean crisis.

As a result of the adoption of ESAP, for much of the 1990s, Zimbabwe descended into a very dangerous abyss, economically, politically and socially, and the situation worsened beyond that period. According to Saul (2005: 22), the era of "disciplining Africa", was an era in which "the neo-liberal reorientation of economic policy became required medicine for virtually all sub-Saharan African economies". He further notes that:

Given that most of Africa's debt was to the World Bank and other multilateral agencies, the Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) emerged as particularly central to the process of dictating global capitalism's new terms to Africa. As manifested in their aggressive administering of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), the invasive impact of the international financial institutions (IFIs) on the national sovereignty of the target economies cannot be overstated (*Ibid*).

During this period, the “informal economy came into its own” because of the deleterious impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), and it was during this time that “backyard industries” sprouted everywhere and more workers found their livelihood in this sector (Saul, 2005: 22). According to Duri (2016), ESAP sought to revitalise the economy and boost the country’s financial position through, among other things, boosting economic growth, job rationalization and retrenchments in the private and public sectors, wage cuts, currency devaluation, trade liberalisation, deregulation of prices, salary cuts, removal of state subsidies and limited government social spending, particularly in health and education. Rather than achieving these positive targets, ESAP led to serious collapse of the country’s economy, which in turn triggered socio-economic and political downturns in the country. On the whole, ESAP severely eroded people’s livelihoods and fast tracked the informalisation of the Zimbabwean economy. The unfolding of events in the early 1990s was important in that it was during this period that there was general economic collapse and dissent became much more widespread. Also, in this period the ruling Mugabe regime became much more repressive and violent. This was reminiscent of the *Gukurabundi* massacres of the early to mid-1980s in which more than 20 000 civilians were massacred by the Korean trained 5th Brigade in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces (Raftopoulos, 2003).

Dissent was also fuelled by the governments’ financial indiscipline during the late 1990s. This was reflected when the government awarded hefty gratuities in 1997 to the country’s Second Chimurenga (second liberation war) war veterans as a way of thanking them for their participation in the “Second Chimurenga” and for pacifying them as they were becoming a thorn in the flesh for the government. The granting of the huge unbudgeted gratuities resulted in the immediate collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar in what was to be recorded in history as the ‘Black Friday’ (Dzinesa, 2000). Since the Zimdollar collapsed overnight then, it never recovered up to 2018. Furthermore, the government of Mugabe also needlessly and expensively got involved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(DRC) civil war from 1998, which chewed up to US\$1 million dollars daily (Bond and Manyanga, 2003). The deployment of the army into the DRC conflict was not only an unwelcome expenditure to the fiscus, but was also an unconstitutional and unilateral act by President Mugabe as the Parliament and the ZANU-PF Politburo – the highest decision-making body of the party, ZANU-PF, were not consulted (*Ibid*). The growing opposition movement, together with civic groups, exploited such government actions to expose the link between the escalating crisis in Zimbabwe with Mugabe and his ZANU-PF. This action by Mugabe further showed his cruelty, ruthlessness, and greediness. As suggested by his critics, Mugabe was lured by the DRC's rich natural resources and a desire to increase his own power and prestige in Africa. The DRC expedition, together with the “plunging economy made political crisis management all the more difficult” (Bond and Manyanga, 2003: 70). The foray into the DRC also meant that the government could not provide a safety net for the population, which was already reeling from the economic crash, since it was diverting its already limited resources towards the war effort. With the parlous state of the economy, Zimbabwe could not afford an expensive military adventure in the DRC. The war resulted in a greater number of casualties as it saw the deployment of more than 13000 troops at an estimated cost of one billion Zimbabwean dollars (Duri, 2016).

Beyond 2000: The Politics of Repression

February 2000 witnessed the advent of the violent land seizures of white commercial farms by the war veterans who became “Mugabe’s shock troops” together with ZANU-PF party youths, and other various radical elements within the ZANU-PF party and supported by diverse partisan security arms of the state (Bond and Manyanga, 2003: 77; Mlambo, 2008). Due to the violent nature in which the 2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) was executed, the programme was popularly referred to as the ‘Third Chimurenga’ or ‘*Jambanja*’ (Kanyenze, 2004).

The FTLRP was characterised by gross human rights abuses. Chambati (2003) notes that the land reform, ethically, politically, and strategically interfaced with human rights. The context of policymaking, legal framework, implementation, and the outcomes of the FTLRP are essentially closely linked to the human rights of Zimbabweans. Hellum and Derman (2004) argued that the FTLRP was a highly centralized and discretion-based political process, not rights or human rights based. The state largely adopted a state-centric rights approach. This was done through amending laws, reforming the judiciary system and the constitution such that the government decided what could be law or rights from its own reference. The implementation of the FTLRP led to the isolation of Zimbabwe in the international system. This is so considering the imposing of sanctions by Britain and the United States as a result of the gross human rights violations which had accompanied the land grabbing exercise. As a result, this led to the lockdown of the Zimbabwean economy as it could not freely trade with the developed world (Kanyenze, 2004, Utete 2003).

The FTLRP also resulted in a decrease in agriculture production which catalysed unemployment in Zimbabwe. Between 1980 and 1999 Zimbabwe's agricultural sector grew steadily, albeit slowly. Producing a diverse range of domestic and export commodities, agriculture contributed over 40% of national exports and 18% of GDP, employed 30% of the formal labour force (350,000 full-time and part-time workers) and 70% of the population depended on the sector (Hellum and Derman, 2004). Before the land reform the country had 26 agricultural products on the market, but in 2008 it had to import almost everything (Hellum and Derman, 2004). The country was the bread basket of Southern Africa, with the farming sector accounted for around 40 percent of Zimbabwe's gross national product and farmers also supplied neighbouring countries with their produce but the country turned into a basket case (Hellum and Derman, 2004). Sachikonye (2003) noted that prior to the land redistribution, an estimated 320,000 to 350,000 farm workers were employed on commercial farms owned mostly by whites numbering about 4,500. The dependents of the farm workers numbered between

1.8 and 2 million (nearly 20 percent of the county's population (Sachikonye, 2003). In order to continue fending for their families, the displaced black farmers resorted to informal activities further swelling the numbers of those already employed in the informal sector in the aftermath of ESAP which had resulted to massive retrenchments due to deindustrialisation at its peak.

Chambati (2003) observes that there were about 300 000 labourers and half of the total number worked on a part-time basis. Based on this observation, Chambati argues that the FTLRP resulted in the massive displacement of these workers who were traditionally drawn from migrant labour. He further notes that nearly a fifth came from the neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi were regarded with suspicion by peasants in the communal areas. Even in the case of those who had been born locally, they were often seen as foreigners and were denied citizenship rights in accordance to the Zimbabwean constitution then (Sachikonye, 2003).

During the FTLRP, the urban populace was marginalised and was perceived as anti-struggle and as enemies of the state by supporting the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition party in 1999, led by former trade unionist turned politician, Morgan Tsvangirai. When the Mugabe regime carried out the 'clean-up operation', the Zimbabwean state hid behind the very thin veneer that it was trying to curb rampant and uncontrolled defacing of the urban landscape in the form of, for example, unauthorized construction of structures, illegal informal trading and increased crime (Vambe, 2008). It could be argued that the urban clean-up exercise can be understood within the context of the increased failure of institutions and Mugabe's own paranoid attempts to cling to power (Mlambo, 2008). Moore (2008: 25) suggests that Operation Murambatsvina should be seen as "an almost logical extension of the techniques of a party that has consistently failed to rule Zimbabwe through consent rather than force or its possibility". During the period leading up to Operation Murambatsvina the "urban dwellers had become politically suspect in the eyes of the ruling ZANU PF elite" (Mlambo, 2008: 21), and they bore the major brunt of the urban clean-up operation. Clearly the case of Operation

Murambatsvina was an attempt to control what was seen as an “unpatriotic” urban population. The operation also revealed that the post-colonial Zimbabwean state was in the “throes of economic, political and cultural crisis” (Vambe, 2008: 1). Operation *Murambatsvina*, in our view was basically about the survival of the paranoid Mugabe and his acolytes in the ruling ZANU-PF. Mugabe had even castigated urbanites as totemless. In this Operation, the majority of people affected were urban dwellers who had been involved in informal trading, and that the operation had a tremendous impact on their income levels.

The demolition of informal trading was done in tandem with the arrest of informal traders. *The Guardian* (24 May 2005) reported that over 9 400 small traders, informal entrepreneurs and flea market stall owners had been arrested in Harare as part of Operation *Murambatsvina*. The same article stated that the government accused stall owners of selling scarce commodities at inflated prices and of being involved in illegal foreign currency deals which were wreaking havoc on the economy. In 2006 a local newspaper, *The Zimbabwe Independent* (29 September 2006), reported that vendors from Mbare and Highfields high-density suburbs, traditional opposition strongholds, had been threatened with withdrawal of trading licenses if they did not attend President Mugabe’s homecoming at the Harare International Airport. This shows the way in which the aftermath of the operation was heavily politicised and how Mugabe sought to gain political control of the urban informal working class. *The Zimbabwe Independent* (29 September 2006) best summaries the hidden dimensions of *Murambatsvina* by arguing that it “must be seen as a deliberate destruction of the survival strategies to which Zimbabweans had to resort as a result of the economic decay deliberately wrought by a government determined to retain power irrespective of the costs imposed on others”. On the whole, more than 32 500 micro businesses across Zimbabwe were destroyed and about 97 550 people; mostly women lost their sources of livelihoods (Duri, 2016).

Zimbabwe’s indigenisation and empowerment statutes further eroded foreign investor confidence and aggravated the

unemployment crisis. The Indigenization and Empowerment Act of 2007, for instance obliged all foreign companies to surrender 51% shares to local entrepreneurs (*The Sunday Mail*, 15 July 2012). No projected or proposed investment in a prescribed sector of the economy was available for investment by domestic or foreign investors for which an investment license was required in terms of the Zimbabwe Investment Authority Act [*Chapter 14:30*] was to be approved unless a controlling interest in the investment was reserved for indigenous Zimbabweans (*Ibid*). While the enactment of the Act created a lot of excitement for the Mugabe acolytes, the immediate effect of the Act was to drive away Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) leading to further deindustrialisation exacerbating the informalisation of the Zimbabwean economy.

Women in the informal economy in Zimbabwe

Women in particular are affected by the informalisation of work and they tend to be overrepresented in informal employment both in developing and developed nations (Mofokeng, 2005). The informal sector is generally a larger source of employment for women than for men and according to Chen (2005) the informal sector is the primary source of employment for women in most developing countries mostly because of their low status in the society and limited levels of education. According to Owen (1996) women from Mozambique, Angola, Somalia and other African countries provide testimonies of brutalities, rape, homelessness, terror and severe psychological damage due to civil and ethnic wars. According to the United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women (2000), African women irrespective of ethnic groups are among the most vulnerable and destitute women in the region. The low status, poverty and violence experienced by women stems from discrimination in inheritance custom and the patriarchal nature of societies (UN, Division for the Advancement of Women, 2000). It is estimated that, for example, in Rwanda, following the genocide of 1994, over 70% of adult women were widowed. In Mozambique, following the 1975 to 1992 civil war, over 70% of children were thought to be dependent

on widowed mothers (Owen, 1996). This is further compounded by the domination of oppressive traditional practices and customary codes which take precedence over constitutional guarantees of equality, modern laws and international women's human rights and standards. The vast majority of women in the informal sector are home-based workers or street vendors.

It has been noted that there is an overlap between working in the informal economy and being poor. A higher percentage of people working in the informal sector relative to the formal sector are poor. Despite the hardships that are encountered by women in the informal economy, the role they play in the socio-economic development of the country is paramount and should not be underestimated (Tripathy, 2003). In fact according to Tripathy (2003), the pace of economic growth of a country can be accelerated by enhancing the status, position and living conditions of women. In the words of Ambassador Melanne Verbeer (2013) cited in The US Global Women's Issues at the US State Department (2015:17) "You cannot beat poverty without putting women at the centre of your development strategies".

To illustrate this, Shinder (2016:17) outlines the following facts and statistics:

Women head a quarter or more of families in many developing nations. Women produce half the food in the developing world and even more in Africa. Women constitute a quarter of the developing world's industrial labour force. Women carry the main responsibility for child care and household chores. Women produce 50% of the world's food supply. Women account for 60% of working force and contribute up to 30% of the official labour but only receive 10% of the world's economy and astoundingly women own less than 1% of the world's estate (Shinder, 2016: 17).

As reflected above women contribute tremendously to the development of the economy of their countries as well as to the world economy. However, as the Zimbabwean crisis continued to

play out, a significant number of men were also involved in the informal sector.

The informalisation of the economy specifically affected women because of their vital role in the welfare of the family. Also it burdened the already vulnerable women such as single mothers and widows. Women, in particular, have been driven to find substitute income sources mainly in the informal sector of the economy. The costs in public services such as health and education have taken a toll on the general poor, and the women in particular, are the hardest hit due to their conflicting roles in the household. In finding a solution to the pressure, they often resort to least-rewarding activities (LRA) like street trading in cheap items like fruits, vegetables or knitting to say the least (Shinder, 2016). Despite of a number of central government ministries and non-state sector agencies to address urban poverty, women generally continue to dominate low-return development activities.

Types of informal activities that are undertaken in Highfields

There are many types of informal activities that Highfields residents, both male and female, have undertaken under Mugabe's long reign. While the informal activities carried out in Highfields are too numerous to mention, the researchers will focus on a selected few. Suffice here to mention that some of the informal activities were of a legal nature as they are sanctioned by both government and council while others are illegal and were carried out outside council authority. It is also important to note that the informal activities carried out in Highfields were both of a small and commercial scale.

Car washing was one such informal activity carried out by some people in Highfields for self-sustenance. People who undertook this activity usually identified a busy place with high visibility to motorists to set up their business and there was no paperwork or payments to the city council or tax to government as these car washes were not registered. Not much capital was also needed to start the business with one needing buckets, access to water, which was usually drawn from council tapes at no cost, detergents, brushes, cloths and wax

polish. Those who would have been in the business for longer can be seen having vacuum cleaners, pressurised pumps and generators which they use to clean cars in the interior and on the outside. A casual walk around Highfields indicated that there were many young people who were running small car wash businesses and their charges to clean a vehicle ranged from US\$1 to \$5 depending on the negotiations made between the two parties of the car owners and car washers.

Foreign currency trading was also a popular money making venture which some people could be seen engaging in Highfields and across many parts of the country. Holding batches of cash comprising of South African Rands and United States Dollars these foreign currency dealers were easily recognizable with their catch phrase '*tokupai ma rands kana ma dollars here*' (can we give you Rands or dollars)? They took advantage of loopholes in the formal foreign currency system and cash crisis in the country and their main customers were people who were travelling to and from South Africa or those had relatives in the Diaspora who were remitting money home which needed to be traded so that it could be used in the country as well as those who needed to buy cars from Japan.

Chihwindi (touting) was another popular money making strategy which young people were seen to be engaging in as a result of informalisation of the economy caused by the Mugabe regime. *Chihwindi* involved people known as *mahwindi* (touts) working at designated bus terminuses or undesignated or illegal terminuses popularly known in Harare as the *mushikashika*. At these pick-up points for commuters the *hwindis* could be seen being very active in calling and seeking customers to board the commuter buses or cars so as to be transported to different destinations for a fee.

Vending was the most popular income generating activity which most Zimbabweans resorted to in Highfields. Vending was also an income generating activity which has roots in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. Previously it was regulated and tightly controlled by municipal authorities and was usually restricted. In contemporary times, vending has included the selling of vegetables, fruits and other food stuffs as well as the selling of *mabhero* (second hand clothing) as

well as other non-edible items. In 2015, there was a proliferation of vendors in Harare city centre when there was a relaxation of the city by laws resulting in thousands of vendors invading the city centre and trading their different wares. One respondent noted that this ushered a phase of resuscitation of those once demolished illegal structures in Highfield suburbs (Interview with Mr. Manzurame, Egypt Resident, Machipisa, 22/01/2018).

Significance of the informal economy

As has already been highlighted, The Zimbabwean crisis involved immense downscaling of the economy and high rates of unemployment levels predominantly in urban areas. Urban life became more and more unbearable for many poor urban households (Leach, 2015). Subsequently, informal economic activities flourished and made significant contributions to household incomes and livelihoods. The role of women in the informal economy in Highfields was particularly prominent. Though their livelihood portfolios supplemented any earnings from formal employment there were a number of daily challenges which they faced in their trading activities and which they sought to counteract through a range of often indigenous coping mechanisms activities (Chirisa, 2012). The bulk of the already unemployed and the employed sought to generate and/ or supplement income through the informal sector.

Various scholars consider the informal sector as a positive contributor to the national economies of Third World countries. It has been observed that despite an existing low productivity in the informal sector, the sector accounts for a sizeable percentage of the GDP in developing countries. For instance, according to Maloney (2004) the study of informal sector in Nigeria, in 1998 its contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 38% thus the informal sector has great potentials in the country's development. Amin (2002) highlights the economic role of the informal sector in stimulating the growth of the market economy, promoting a flexible labour market and stimulating production activities in Zimbabwe. According to Leach (2015) Small to Medium

Enterprises (SME) were estimated to be contributing 40% of the country's total gross domestic product (GDP) as the economy continued to regresses.

As the Zimbabwean crisis continued to play out, the informal sector undoubtedly became the paradise for their majority of the former working class and the unemployed due to the scarcity of formal jobs. Charmes (1998) adumbrates that the informal economy had a significant role in employment provision, and was particularly relevant in the creation of livelihoods opportunities and alleviating poverty as part of survival strategies of the poor. According to ILO (2002), precise measurement of informality is difficult but informal employment is thought to account for around 60 percent of all urban employment in Africa and in India it employs over 95 percent of non-agricultural women. Rogerson (2012) postulates that in South Africa the informal economy forms a key component of strategies to address unemployment and poverty and to support the creation of sustainable livelihoods. In 2012, in Harare, there were 2, 1 million people active in the informal economy (Rogerson, 2012). According to some respondents in Highfields, about three quarters of the population in the suburb are engaged in the informal sector. The situation is not getting any better as more join the sector almost every day. In this regard, it can be concluded that through employment creation the informal sector helps in supplementing family wages.

On the other hand, some scholars raised the issue of the environmental impact as a negative contribution of the informal sector. According to Davies (1978), most informal sector workers in Zimbabwe are located on the pavements or along the sides of footpaths that link the area of commercial and residential areas of the city established on footpaths on the open space area. In Highfields, Gazaland was a typical example of this home industry area. There was lack of adequate market buildings which resulted in the use of shanty buildings by the informal workers making the city dirty. Lusaka and Jerusalem were characterised by scattered shanties where many people carried out their informal activities for livelihood sustenance. Due to these informal activities, lots of rubbish including tin cans, plastic, green shells of maize, papers, rotten tomatoes and

other items are thrown in the streets of Highfield suburbs such as Lusaka, Egypt, Jerusalem, Canaan, Paradise and Engineering.

Kelley (2014) notes that the informal sector contributes negatively to the government fiscal as some informal traders are not normally registered with the municipal authorities. The fact that most informal traders in Highfields did not register with the city council clearly showed that they did not pay taxes. Chirisa (2013) notes that only those who sold their products at designated areas usually paid those subscriptions but a wide range of operators did not operate on designated places. Designated places included the one in Lusaka nicknamed *Mbare Musika*. Also, the fact that production was normally outside government control, official statistics were generally not available. They also faced stiff competition with big businesses which made them feel inferior and of less importance to the national economy. Mugabe's policies did nothing to better the welfare of the majority Highfields residents. In actual fact, his policies pushed them to the fringes where many families had to engage in some informal activities to sustain their households. Even those formally employed had to turn to the informal sector to supplement their meagre wages and salaries. According to Chirisa (2009), the informal sector in Zimbabwe was characterised by a diverse range of small-scale and micro activities usually with no corresponding institutions such as banks and with none of the opportunities for growth and accumulation which typify formal small-scale enterprises.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that while Mugabe took advantage of the informal sector to sustain his stranglehold to power for a very long time, it got to a time in which almost everybody in Highfields was selling something to someone. Some informal traders in Highfields, particularly those who were advocates of Mugabe's indigenisation drive, were initially excited about their informal activities and they would even boast that they were doing things on their own and in their way. However, as the Zimbabwean economic meltdown continued to unfold in the last two decades, the informal sector became oversubscribed in Highfields. It is no wonder that when the war veterans organised the November 2017 massive march that started from Zimbabwe grounds (Highfields) to State House that

was meant to push for Mugabe's resignation, the informal traders in Highfields played a significant role in his ouster. Although their 'work' did not allow them to take a day off, thousands of informal traders in Highfields joined in the historic march against Mugabe's ouster.

According to one respondent, 'most traders totally shut down their business to join the march with great hope that when Mugabe leave power things could get better, the economy would recover and jobs would be available once again. We had hope that if we unite as Zimbabweans we can transform our lives' (Jane Matambandzo, Egypt, 30/03/2018). However, some informal traders saw the march as a glorious opportunity to sell their stuff. For instance, during the march, several vendors were selling different products mainly food stuffs such as bananas, oranges, apples, freezits and popcorn (*maputi*). However, some were totally pessimistic about the situation. Another respondent added that, 'I did not waste my time marching rather I took a day off to rest. It is no secret that Zimbabwe wants regime change not those silly tricks, I trust nothing.' (Interview with Miss Beauty Nyamayaro, Egypt Resident, Machipisa, 30/05/2018). It is important to note that the informal activities taking place in Highfields were a macrocosm of the situation obtaining in most urban areas across the country. This in general alienated Mugabe from the urban populace and made the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai a darling of most urbanites as it seemed to offer an alternative path to Mugabe's failed economic initiatives.

Challenges encountered in the informal economy

There were several factors that confronted the informal sector in Highfields. Like in other parts of the country, the informal sector in Zimbabwe suffered from inadequate labour legislation, protection, social security schemes and limited access to wage workers organisations (Becker, 2004). From the results of the study, people in Highfields who were in the informal economy were vulnerable and faced numerous risks because there was no security and protection for them. The informal traders earned low and irregular incomes, had

limited bargaining powers to raise salaries and encounter high work related risks such as less secure contracts, fewer benefits and poor working conditions.

Lack of infrastructure was also another serious impediment to the full blossoming of the informal sector in Highfields. The issues encountered included transport, storage facilities, water, electricity, and lack of working premises and poorly developed physical markets. Most of the roads were hardly accessible that bread delivery trucks struggled to reach some places and this resulted in challenges on service delivery hence affecting small businesses as people involved had to go to designated places to buy bread for resale. Canagarajah and Sethiraman (2001) added that most of the urban enterprises had difficulties in getting access to land or space and a few could afford to rent or own such land hence many were driven to operate in marginal or peripheral areas. In the case of Highfields, most space had already been monopolised by others to carry out their businesses so the new comers were obliged to operate from their houses because there was no more space. Those with corner houses were making brisk business out of them by renting their places to those who wished to set up their cabins to open tuck-shops.

Overcrowding and competition were also perennial challenges to the informal sectors players in Highfields. According to Chen (2008) the existing pressures of the informal workforce were partly the result of overcrowding and competition within the informal sector. Canagarajah and Sethiraman (2001) assert that the enterprises were small and they required little or no capital investment which leads to overcrowding in informal enterprises. Furthermore, the informal economy was reflective of high measures of entry barriers into the formal economy. There were high levels of illiteracy, poor education, training and high proportions of female employees.

In Highfields, though the informal economy thrived, it faced serious challenges that were difficult to address because of its nature. It was difficult for policy makers to handle such issues because the informal economy was not regulated and there was little or no statistical data on its existence and manifestation. To them, the informal sector had created an opportunity for them to survive. They

had been ‘pushed to the periphery’ due to economic hardships that characterised the economy, beginning around 1997 and which became more vicious after Operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005.

Insults and corruption by the law operational agencies was another challenge that was being faced by the informal traders. The Harare City Council was a threat to informal sector activities when it came to licensing. It ignored the fact that there were no jobs and continued to insult and abuse the informal operators. Furthermore, instead of establishing permanent trading sites, council officials compelled them to pay rentals which were fees they paid to the town council officials for operating in those open spots where they were prone to adverse weather. The fees ranged from different figures as it depended on the type of goods sold. According to one respondent, those with *misika* were required to pay two American dollars a day and those in designated shades had to pay US 70 dollars a month. The major challenge alluded to by several informal operators in Highfields was that, sometimes they were given receipts when they paid while in most cases they were not, meaning that the money was not intended for the official purposes and office records but for personal enrichment. One respondent shared that:

These agencies are very selfish and not fair to us. Instead of enforcing the law as it is, they rob us of the little money we make. Most of the money we give to them is not receipted for. It’s like when they want money for their personal use they just come to us and ask for rental fees which is very bad...” (Interview with Mrs. Chata, Canaan Resident, Machipisa, 30/01/2018).

Another respondent weighed in by highlighting that:

Sometimes when we fail to pay the rentals and license fee they seize goods which they estimate to be of the equivalent value with the license money, but most of the times they seize good way above the license money and sell them at very low prices not even enough for the license...” (Interview with Mrs. Kaseke. Lusaka Resident, Machipisa, 30/01/2018).

After collecting all the fees from the women operating along the roads in Highfields nothing was being done to develop or build permanent selling spots or structures.

Informal operators had limited access to credit facilities. They usually lacked capital to start their business and had limited access to loans as they lacked guarantees. Lacking access to credit made it difficult for them to purchase equipment and new stuff to sell. This made it difficult for the informal traders to expand their businesses. They faced microfinance high interest rates in cases where they borrowed loans. Micro-finance institutions such UNTU had made an effort to help Highfields business people with capital to boost their businesses through loans. However, many traders had criticised the high interest rates charged by the micro finance institution. One respondent stated that they are given US\$300 and were expected to pay back US\$42 per week. This was not feasible due to the fact that there was low demand for their merchandise at times. As a result, some enterprising informal traders in Highfields started social savings clubs known as “*maround*” so as to boost their capital and in the process avoid borrowing from micro finance institutions.

Low demand for goods and services was another challenge faced. Of such challenges noted was the low customer turn up, which translated that there was low demand and hence low income to meet all the day to day needs of their families. However, to some traders especially vendors who operated in *mbare* Lusaka *musika*, their incomes were steadily reasonable to be able to support their families including dependents from the extended family. A male vendor operating at Machipisa flea market shared that:

When I started selling, I could afford to take my child to a group A school where I managed to pay high school fees and even buy a car with my income, but recently it has become difficult, there is no money and I have withdrawn my child from the group A school now. Even the university graduates are coming to join us every day and the market has flooded which is pathetic...” (Interview with Mr. Ruzvidzo. Egypt Resident, Machipisa, 30/01/2018).

A significant number of the informal operators revealed during interviews that they had left formal employment at a time when it appeared like much more income could be obtained from participating in the informal sector than the formal sector. Miss Marufu, for instance stated that:

“I was working for the National Railways of Zimbabwe, and had to leave formal work to work in the informal sector as I found it better paying than formal employment, but things have changed now, there is low demand and high competition...” (Interview with Miss Marufu. Western Triangle Resident, Machipisa, 20/01/2018).

Other respondents indicated that they the requisite educational qualifications that could make them access white collar jobs but the jobs remained elusive. One respondent retorted:

We are in the informal sector not because we are not educated, most of us are graduates, and like me I graduated in 2012 but could not get an opportunity to work. Whether you are gainfully employed or not, at some point you are supposed to start a family and cater for it, so you have to find something to do to sustain your family’ (Interview with Mrs. Gurajena. Egypt Resident, Machipisa, 30/05/2018).

The above clearly demonstrates that looked at retrospectively; there is no doubt that Mugabe left a legacy of economic ruin. The situation in Highfields was reminiscent of what was found in other high density suburbs around the city of Harare and other parts of the country. As one young frustrated unemployed university graduate adumbrated, “There is nothing left for us as a future generation. What took thirty seven years to destroy will obviously take another thirty seven years to rebuild” (Interview with John Matare, Paradise vendor, 21/02/2018).

Lack of permanent trading sites and public toilets was also a huge challenge for the informal operators in Highfields. Most people resorted to occupying every open space available especially along roads where many people passed through. At such sites, there were

no public toilets and water for sanitation and hygiene. Some of them even operated besides leaking sewer tanks. Operating at such open spaces exposed them to many challenges such as depreciation of goods being sold ranging from food to property due to adverse weather conditions as discussed above. Informal operators also faced the challenges of poor drainage systems at their work places which resulted in having dirty water all over. During the Mugabe era, garbage collection became erratic and inconsistent. The city council was found wanting when it came to refuse collection. The council also took longer to empty the bins which increased the dumping of litter. When they came they went racing leaving many wastes uncollected. Those with better sites were those who could afford to rent structures for instance those who rented building structures at Machipisa. However, for some, their place of operation made them very vulnerable to diseases as there were sewer leakages. Mostly during rainy seasons the so called Mbare Musika in Lusaka was prone to cholera as a result of late collection of refuse by the city council.

In Highfields, about 55% of the respondents noted that they earned US\$401.00 and above and were able to send their children to school, pay housing rentals, buying food, payment of electricity and water bills. Those with very petty businesses like vending earned a maximum amount of US\$15 per day but that usually depended with the period and the charging. From the research 28% of the respondents said that they managed to get income ranging from US\$251 to US\$400. With the income women in informal activities some people managed to acquire assets which included furniture. 5% who earned less than US\$100 per month said they had few months joining the sector and had few clients known to them yet the business flourished depending with the popularity of a person. However, although many households produced income that was sufficient for basic survival the incomes could not achieve much more as the majority supported a considerable number of dependents. Also noted was a huge gap between these informal traders. Some are so rich and earned huge sums of money every month for instance they could be able to establish big businesses such as the business woman who owned Sifra Supermarkets, colleges and butcheries in Highfields.

This also applied to the owner of Crown choice Supermarkets at Machipisa.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the extent to which Mugabe's ruinous domestic and foreign policies resulted in the increased informalisation of the Zimbabwean economy. The chapter has demonstrated that while Zimbabwe enjoyed relative economic stability during the first decade of independence, the situation did not last long as there was a drastic deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the general populace from the 1990s. This forced desperate but innovative Zimbabweans to rely on the informal sector for their livelihoods and sustenance. The chapter has further demonstrated that the people in Highfields faced several challenges in their day to day operations, but they nevertheless persevered against all adversity. These people also played a significant role in Mugabe's dethronement as they took an active role during the November 2017 massive demonstration led by war veterans which started at the Zimbabwe Grounds to State House, and Mugabe's citadel of power at that time. What is significant though is that the legacy of informalisation left by Mugabe through his disastrous long reign, has continued after his November 2017 ouster and appears it will take some time to eradicate.

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Creation of a Lasting Legacy: Traditional Medical Practice in Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe

Elias G. Konyana

Introduction

It is undeniable that Traditional Medical Practice (TMP) has been central to the health needs of most Zimbabweans from all walks of life, more prominently after Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980. Unfortunately, the recognition, use and development of TMP as part of the mainstream healthcare delivery system required vigorous policy shift by the government of independent Zimbabwe. Incidentally, before independence, the settler colonial government did not recognise, let alone accept TMP as a credible health-care system, even though most indigenous people depended on it (Waite, 2000; Muguti, 2016). The colonial government reserved the provision of ‘modern’ medical services for the few European settlers and their families. Thus, African medical needs were not adequately catered for, which means that most Africans relied on the traditional medical system to prevent, treat and cure diseases. Consequently, throughout the duration of colonialism in Zimbabwe, there existed a huge gap between traditional and allopathic medical systems. This was a clear case of the colonial government’s negligence and indifference in recognising and developing TMP as a local people’s medical system. Except in cases where Africans were cared for in order to serve the interests of European settlers on farms and mines, no attention was devoted to African medical needs. In this regard, an extensive quotation from Walter Rodney (1973) is necessary to illustrate how colonialists had no plan to provide and improve social service provisions for Africans. Rodney aptly noted that:

For the first three decades of colonialism, hardly anything was done that could remotely be termed a service to the African people. It was in fact only after the last war that social service were built as a matter of policy. How little they amounted to does not really need illustrating. After all, the statistics which show that Africa today is underdeveloped are the statistics representing the state of affairs at the end of colonialism. For that matter, the figures at the end of the first decade of African independence in spheres such as health, housing and education are often several times higher than the figures inherited by the newly independent governments (Rodney, 1972: 224).

The quote above explains clearly the fact that European colonial governments were not really interested in developing African countries, let alone provide social amenities that would improve the lives of the colonised indigenous Africans.

Nevertheless, soon after gaining independence in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe, led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe as Prime Minister, instituted healthcare reforms to streamline traditional medicine and practices with conventional medicine in an attempt to bridge the gap between the two medical systems. Thus, immediately after its installation, the Zimbabwean government adopted the 1977 World Health Organisation (WHO) mantra of “Health For All by the Year 2000”, as a guiding principle for addressing the medical needs of the general populace (WHO, 2001). This development saw the birth of the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA), led by Professor Gordon Chavunduka, in July 1980 (Waite, 2000).

The founding of ZINATHA was the culmination of the desire by African traditional healers, herbalists and diviners alike, for recognition and permission to practise publicly (Chavunduka, 1994). Realising the importance of traditional medicine and the role it played in sustaining the medical needs of freedom fighters during the liberation war, the government adopted a medical policy shift and instantaneously promulgated a new law, the Traditional Medical Practitioners Act (Chapter 27:14), which became effective on 16 October 1981. The law provided the legal framework for the

recognition and development of traditional medicine and a whole gamut of traditional medical practices in independent Zimbabwe (Chavunduka, 1994).

In this chapter, therefore, the argument is that the status of African traditional medical practices was comprehensively elevated by the new government of Robert Mugabe when it came to power in 1980. However, the chapter acknowledges Tasara Muguti's (2016:101) argument concerning the popularity of the use of traditional medicine in the 2000s in Zimbabwe where he said: "The upsurge in the use of African Traditional Medicine in Zimbabwe was largely a result of the collapse of the government's health-delivery system during a debilitating crisis characterised by extreme socio-economic challenges and political turbulence."

Although Muguti (*Ibid*) argues that traditional medicine and practices came to prominence during the crises years of 2000-2008, this chapter accepts that observation but upholds the position that traditional medicine and all related practices were officialised and made popular even before the crises years owing to the changes in medical policies instituted by the new government of Robert Mugabe after 1980. While it is true that many people, who usually depended on Western medicine as a choice, turned to the use of traditional medicine during the crises years, it is equally noteworthy to accede to the fact that traditional medical practices were given space to flourish when Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. Thus, the focus of this chapter is on the immediate expansive recognition of TMP in the post-independence era as a legacy that the Mugabe regime generated for the country. To this end, Zimbabwean traditional healers and herbalists have become a force to reckon with not only within the country but also outside its borders.

The chapter highlights the positive medical policy frameworks that the government instituted to rationalise traditional medicine and traditional medical practices, thereby making TMP recognisable as being at par, if not better, with modern medical practices and institutions. Using consequentialism as the lens of analysis, this chapter explores the commitment of Robert Mugabe's government

in uplifting TMP as a legacy for which his regime is celebrated to this day.

The status of traditional medical practice in colonial Zimbabwe

As noted earlier, before gaining independence in April 1980, in Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia), African traditional medical practice and services were not recognised by the European settler government (Chavunduka, 1994). It is a fact that TMP in colonial Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa, was never developed by the colonialists. It was largely despised and ignored by the Christian missionaries who were the first to establish Western medicine in most African countries (Waite, 2000). The ‘modern’ medical sector was staffed and run by Europeans. However, like in all the other areas of social life during the colonial period, medical services were administered on apartheid basis. Most of the indigenous people, who constituted the majority of the population, did not receive medical services from the European-run clinics and hospitals except for a few, most of who, incidentally, were treated at Church-run mission stations for ailments that seemingly posed a threat to the welfare of the minority Europeans (*Ibid*). Naturally, this situation meant that the majority of the indigenous population relied on traditional medical providers and their ostensibly ‘underworld’ institutions.

However, immediately after setting up mission clinics and hospitals, the missionaries realised that the local [African] people continued to patronise traditional medicine. This situation irritated the European missionaries who then began to demonise TMP in all possible ways. On this point, a short passage from Waite (2000: 238), a psychologist and certified hypnotherapist, summarises the colonial government’s strategy in its effort to destroy TMP. She thus noted:

Opposition to traditional medicine was very strong among missionaries, colonial officials, doctors and nurses who laid the foundation of Western medical services in colonial Africa. The champions of Western medicine took various measures against traditional medicine, such as seeking to undermine its legitimacy

through missionary schools, organising their own professional organisations which could censure colleagues who referred patients to traditional doctors and insulting patients who used traditional medicine.

The consequence of the new Rhodesian government's approach to TMP was the establishment of legal policies which made the use and practice of traditional medicine illegal. Thus, in the majority of African countries, traditional medical practices were outlawed as "harmful and dangerous" (World Health Organisation, 2001: 89). This effectively dismissed indigenous healing practices as superstition and the traditional medical practitioners as charlatans. In the case of colonial Zimbabwe, the practice of traditional medicine was further undermined by the promulgation of the Witchcraft Suppression Act (Chapter 9:19) in 1899. The Act criminalised all forms of traditional healing and the use of traditional medicine and objects. Furthermore, the Act had wide-ranging effects which included the dissolution of all the powers and control of traditional courts. For example, before the passing of the Act, African traditional courts had powers to identify, accuse and prosecute villagers of witchcraft practices (*Ibid*). But under the same Act, traditional courts could no longer do the same because, according to the colonial government, "...the whole practice of witchcraft was a pretence and a sham [with] no real existence at all" (Chavunduka, 1994:23). Consequently, for many years thereafter, traditional medical practice suffered scorn, disapproval and disdain from the colonial government. Despite the fact that some medical doctors of European origin, such as Michael Gelfand and Michael Bourdillon, were interested in studying the efficacy of traditional herbs, "...top government officials did all they could to dispel such efforts towards research and development of traditional medicine" (Waite, 2000: 241). In addition, Christian missionaries took advantage of the Witchcraft Suppression Act and ensured that their African converts developed and exhibited no interest in using or being associated with traditional medicine and African culture itself. They discouraged Christian converts from visiting traditional healers whom they referred to as pagans. For

instance, all herbal medicines were dismissed as unscientific and of no good consequence (Chavunduka, 1994).

Despite all the discouragement, there were some African Christians who would visit traditional healers secretly and got assisted with conditions for which they would have received no help from Western-trained medical doctors. Some of the challenges African Christian converts faced included barrenness which was generally believed to be caused by evil spirits (Dube, 2008). However, non-Christian indigenous people, with the same problem, would be free to seek help from traditional healers. Some African Christian converts realised that traditional medicines and, indeed, certain indigenous cultural practices and beliefs, were indispensable. One such woman was Mrs Chaza who was a staunch member of the Women's Group (*Ruwadzano*) in the Methodist Church. After facing much resistance and discouragement from the European section of her church, she founded a faith-healing ministry in the 1950s, particularly to help barren African Christian women (*Ibid*).

Mrs Chaza's ministry immediately rose to prominence because it did not ignore the influence of traditional cultural practices and beliefs in the lives of African Christian converts (Konyana and Konyana, 2018). The ministry focused on appeasing evil spirits so that Christian converts could enjoy their new statuses. As such, Mrs Chaza believed in the exorcism of evil spirits (demons) first before resorting to Western medicine for the latter to be effective. For this approach to the health and wellbeing of Africans, Mrs Chaza's ministry was constantly attacked by the colonial government (Zvobgo, 1986). However, the ministry continued to grow as it attracted many followers from all across colonial Zimbabwe and beyond. As an African Initiated Church (AIC), the ministry provided an acceptable alternative to the more despised traditional medical practice. In fact, most AICs were founded in response to, among other reasons, the alienation of traditional healing from the African Christian converts and to provide an opportunity to integrate traditional or indigenous African practices and beliefs with the Christian faith. According to Daneel (1987:39), the most influential AICs in colonial Zimbabwe were the "Spirit-type churches" which

attracted many African Christian followers. Chaza's church was one such AIC which made a great appeal to many spiritually-tormented African Christians. Nevertheless, traditional medical practice *per se*, remained legally undermined and underdeveloped and yet it endured the 90 years of disenfranchisement during the colonial rule.

It is from this background that at independence, the Zimbabwean government of Robert Mugabe took far-reaching measures to ensure that African traditional medical practice attained official recognition and continue to play a significant role in the national health delivery system along with the allopathic medical system. However, though the importance of traditional medical practice was downplayed by the colonial regime, its usefulness was evident during the war of liberation where freedom fighters often relied on it as their primary healthcare mechanism.

Traditional healers, spirit mediums and the war of liberation

In the previous section, it was highlighted that African traditional medicine is closely linked to African spirituality. This suggests that there is a spiritual dimension to traditional medical practice which cannot be ignored. Gale (1960), a colonial administrator in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), also acknowledged the role of spirit mediums in the use of traditional medicine. He noted that: "Africans...had their own doctors... who were skilled herbalists and good botanists and shrewd psychologists, but who were also the priests who combined with their medicine a mysticism that gave them complete control, physical and spiritual power, over their patients" (*Ibid:145*). This acknowledgement of the presence of traditional healers and their function among indigenous people remained throughout the colonial period.

In fact, throughout the African continent, most traditional healers acknowledge the claim that African traditional medical practice takes a holistic approach where disease, good health, success or failure are all believed to be the products of the actions of individuals and ancestral spirits according to the balance or imbalance between the individual and the social environment (Kofi, 2005). The

war for the liberation of Zimbabwe presented a difficult medical environment for the freedom fighters to the extent that traditional medicine became the major primary healthcare alternative. Thus, during the fight for Zimbabwe's independence, freedom fighters relied heavily on traditional healers for medical and spiritual services. Some of the participants interviewed by Farai Chisanyu admitted that the liberation war presented an environment in which traditional healers, spirit mediums and ancestors played a pivotal role which eventually shaped the destiny of the country's traditional medical system after independence (Chisanyu, 2015).

Freedom fighters believed in the power and influence of traditional healers and spirit mediums. For instance, the fighters in the First *Chimurenga/ Umvukela* (liberation war) of 1896-1897 were reportedly inspired by influential mediums such as *Mbuya* (Grandmother) Nehanda and *Sekuru* (Grandfather) Kaguvi, who later on inspired and guided the freedom fighters of the Second *Chimurenga/ Umvukela* from the 1960s (Lan, 1985). Actually, legend has it that, before the protracted armed struggle leading to independence had started, the spirit mediums informed the people that there was going to be a war for them to drive away the colonialists and re-claim their land. This proclamation implies that the ancestors had spiritual control over the land and its natural resources before the advent of colonialism. During the liberation struggle, the ancestors, through the various spirit mediums, are believed to have played very important roles in giving guidance, awareness and strategies on how to overpower the African people's colonial enemy (Arkovitz, 1990). Therefore, as they were inspired by the ancestors, traditional healers are argued to have helped the guerrillas with traditional medicines for the treatment and prevention of different types of health problems (Chisanyu, 2015). They treated the wounded and sick fighters using traditional medicine alongside the few Western medicines supplied by friends of the freedom fighters. It is from this perspective that freedom fighters held on to traditional medicines and spiritual healers among them throughout the war and beyond.

For the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) - the military wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) party- Herbert Ushewokunze, who later became the first indigenous African substantive Minister of Health in the cabinet of Robert Mugabe, was in charge of the freedom fighters' medical needs during the war. He, together with Simon Mazorodze, were actively involved in politics and gave financial and medical assistance to the ZANLA forces. They worked tirelessly in areas such as Shurugwi, Zaka, Mwenezi and Masvingo urban, carrying out operations on injured combatants in the bush and supplying drugs (Chisanyu, 2015). Thus, these and a few other Western-trained [indigenous] African medical doctors made sure that freedom fighters' healthcare needs were catered for by enlisting the services of traditional healers along with Western medical provisions which were usually in short supply.

Medical policy shift in post-independence Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 marked a turning point in the historical incompatibility between the allopathic and the traditional medical systems. In 1981, two significant statutes on the practice of traditional medicine, the Natural Therapists Act and the Traditional Medical Practitioners Council Act were enacted and traditional medical researches and related activities immediately received government funding (Chavunduka, 1994). Before independence, the colonial government did not devote any money towards the development of traditional medicines. Instead, huge sums of money were allocated towards developing the Western medical sector while none was set aside for the traditional medical system (Waite, 2000). However, on attaining independence, the Zimbabwean government continued to support allopathic medicine as well as recognising and developing the traditional medical sector. In doing so, the government acknowledged that traditional medicines had demonstrated efficacy in areas such as mental health, disease prevention, treatment of non-communicable diseases and improvement of the quality of life for persons living with chronic conditions (WHO, 2001).

The first post-independence Ministry of Health, headed by an indigenous African minister, was made to preside over both allopathic and traditional medical sectors. In Zimbabwe, the comprehensive scope of the two Acts provided a sharp contrast to the general legalisation on the practice of traditional medicine adopted in other African countries (WHO, 2001). Below are details of the two most important revolutionary legal instruments that brought traditional medical practice to prominence in post-independent Zimbabwe.

The Natural Therapists Act of 1981

In 1981, the Natural Therapists Act (Chapter 27:09) was the first legal instrument to come on board, focusing on the significance and activities of traditional healers of all kinds in Zimbabwe. It was enacted to validate and regulate the organisation and registration of all natural (traditional) therapists who include homeopaths, naturopaths and osteopaths in the country (Lan, 1985). Under the Act, it became an offence for an unregistered person to engage in the practice of these professions for gain or to claim to be a registered natural therapist. By the same Act, all traditional therapists or healers were made to appreciate their importance in the healthcare system and allowed to register and practice freely in Zimbabwe. This formalisation of traditional healing practices saw the visibility of traditional healers across the country since the government had legalised traditional medical practices. However, it is important to point that the Natural Therapists Act was not inclusive of all types of traditional healing processes that were available in the country. It focused on homeopaths, naturopaths and osteopaths at the exclusion of traditional spirit mediums and faith healers. Hence, there was need for an all-inclusive legal instrument to regulate traditional medicine and traditional medical practitioners.

The Traditional Medical Practitioners Council Act of 1981

The Traditional Medical Practitioners Council Act (Chapter 27:14) was immediately enacted to accommodate practitioners such as prophets, pastors and faith healers as part of traditional healers in the country. This enactment was urgent because there was need to organise and control an influx of practitioners who had come out to practise in different parts of the country. The World Health Organisation (2001) noted that the Act was one of the most comprehensive pieces of legislation on the practice of traditional medicine that has been enacted anywhere in the world. Under the terms of the Act, the practice of traditional medicine and traditional healing includes every act the object of which is to treat, identify, analyse, or diagnose, without the application of operative surgery, any illness of the body or mind by traditional methods (Traditional Medical Practitioners Act [Chapter 27:14]).

The most important point about the Traditional Medical Practitioners Council Act is that it recognised the formation of the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA) as the association for traditional medical practitioners in Zimbabwe. According to Gordon Chavunduka (1994), who led the association as its President from 1980 till the early 1990s, it was necessary that traditional healers were organised so as to be regarded as a force to reckon with in the healthcare sector. The Act provided the conditions for the recognition of ZINATHA as a legal body to which all traditional healers should belong. Before independence, Chavunduka was already a recognised authority on traditional medicine and had undertaken several studies on traditional medicine and traditional healers (Waite, 2000).

According to the Traditional Medical Practitioners Act (Chapter 27: 14), there was also a superintendent body, the Traditional Medical Practitioners Council, whose responsibilities were to:

1. supervise the control and practice of traditional medical practitioners,
2. promote the practice of traditional medical practitioners, foster research into traditional medical practice,

3. develop knowledge of traditional medical practice,
4. hold inquiries for the purpose of the Traditional Medical Practitioners Council Act, and,
5. avail grants or loans to associations or persons where the Council considers this necessary or desirable for, or incidental to, the attainment of the purposes of the Council.

It is clear that, at independence, the government of Robert Mugabe was determined not only to bring traditional medicines and all traditional medical practitioners to the limelight, but also to sanitise the traditional medical profession itself. This was demonstrated by the passion with which the government introduced revolutionary medical reforms and legal instruments or policies to govern TMP as a whole.

The current status of TMP in Zimbabwe

Traditional medical practice in Zimbabwe and, indeed in southern Africa as a whole, is rife (Waite, 2000; Mawere, 2011; Muguti; 2016). Incidentally, traditional medical practitioners and faith healers are awash in Zimbabwe, a situation which did not obtain during the colonial period. A number of reasons can be presented to explain the phenomenon. For example, Muguti (2016) claims that Zimbabwe's political and socio-economic crisis during the New Millennium led to the country's isolation, resulting in the collapse of social services such as health and education. The consequence was the rise in cost of all social amenities including Western medical services so that the ordinary citizens turned to traditional medicine as the only alternative. To stress this point, Muguti (2016:102) appropriately described the socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe accordingly: Medical costs went beyond the reach of most Zimbabweans due to skyrocketing unemployment rates and record-level hyperinflation. The ordinary people were the worst affected as they increasingly ran out of disposable incomes to afford medical expenses that had become exorbitant due to the scarcity of drugs and the flight of critical health personnel. As such, from Muguti's

(2016) point of view, the use of traditional medicine in post-colonial Zimbabwe came to prominence due to the economic crisis that made it difficult for people to afford Western medical services. Others, such as Mawere (2011) and Shoko (2018) further argue that the outbreak of nagging diseases such as AIDS and cancer, and the lack of effective responses by Western medicine, left many people with no option but to turn back to traditional medicine and faith healing.

However, TMP has been rocked with a fair share of failures despite the successes. While it is commendable that the Mugabe government fronted the formalisation of traditional medicines and medical practices, there was inadequate fiscal dedication to the full development of the traditional medical professional sector. For example, although the government allowed ZINATHA to set up traditional medical training institutions or colleges, the financial support has been hard to come by, leading to the closure of such institutions.

In addition to the fiscal quandaries affecting TMP, problems associated with the negative image of African traditional medicine are still raw and need transformation in order to bring on board the healing practices not as an appendage to Western medical systems but as a competitive and complementary force on the continent's health delivery systems. Unfortunately, some colonial legal prohibitions such as the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1899 continue to haunt TMP to this day. Although the Witchcraft Suppression Act has, as recently as in 2016, undergone amendments to the extent of acknowledging that witchcraft is a reality among Africans, there are still sticking issues to do with the accusation and prosecution of witchcraft practitioners in Zimbabwe.

Ethical implications of Zimbabwe's healthcare policy shift

Policy change of any kind often brings about positive and negative results. In any case, there are attendant ethical implications on the lives of the people affected by such changes. Notwithstanding some unintended consequences associated with TMP in Zimbabwe today (WHO, 2013), the policy shift that happened in the healthcare

sector under Mugabe's rule can best be described as phenomenal and far-reaching. Through utilitarianism lenses, this chapter argues that one of the most immediate effects of post-independence healthcare policy shift was the achievement of a somewhat egalitarian Zimbabwean society in which healthcare services, including traditional medicines, were made "must-haves" for all Zimbabweans.

The principle of utilitarianism (also known as consequentialism) is a set of theories in normative ethics which holds that the proper course of action is the one that maximises utility (Shaw, 1998). It is usually defined as a theory that claims that praiseworthy actions or decisions, be they at personal or organisational level, are those that maximise total human benefit and reduce suffering or the negatives. According to Buchholz and Rosenthal (1998:25), "[u]tilitarianism involves some conception of the "good" or ultimate utility in terms of which the effects of all the alternatives are to be evaluated." By implication, this means that the consequence of healthcare policy shift by Mugabe's government was to raise the level of TMP to that of Western medicine and make it available to all citizens for the good of their health. Admittedly, the ultimate result was the professionalisation of TMP, which eventually made it legal to access it from registered practitioners (Chavunduka, 1994; Shoko, 2010; Mafuva and Marima-Matarira, 2014). This was out of government's realisation that conceptualisation of health and disease is not limited to purely Western biomedical definitions and that the general populace stood to benefit from TMP as a whole (Batisai, 2016).

Another consequence of the policy shift was a sudden increase in the number of visible traditional and faith healers in Zimbabwe, with ZINATHA-affiliated traditional healers "...publicly displaying advertisements of their expertise in the treatment of various ailments such as HIV and AIDS-related symptoms, High Blood Pressure, Sugar Diabetes, Malaria, Herpes, Asthma, Cancer, Syphilis, etc." (Shoko, 2018: 243-244). Within a few years of independence, the whole field of TMP was permanently demystified, allowing practitioners and patients to engage each other openly. Thus, equality of opportunity, equality before the law and equal access to social

amenities such as health and education were regarded as priorities by Mugabe and his regime.

Conclusion

This chapter has maintained that, though generally with his own weaknesses, perhaps, one of Mugabe's positive lasting legacies is in the healthcare sector where, immediately after independence, his government managed to revolutionise the healthcare sector by focusing on the efficacy of traditional medical practice alongside Western medicine. This approach to healthcare gave the people the impression that Mugabe was a leader who had a passion for improving the lives of ordinary people in Zimbabwe. He had realised that Western medicine had always been beyond the reach of the majority besides its inability to deal with other ailments, and thus immediately recognised the efficacy of TMP. The chapter has argued that the Mugabe administration should be applauded for managing to bring the once marginalised African traditional medical practices on board within the first year of assuming power as it went on to introduce legal instruments to sustain TMP professionally. This brought confidence and a sense of national identity in the majority of the Zimbabweans, most of who believed that the Mugabe regime was people-centred, a legacy that he later on took advantage of and extended his rule for 37 years.

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The Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Post-colonial Zimbabwe: A Sloganeering Gimmick?

Tenson Muyambo

Introduction

Land reform, particularly the Zimbabwe Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), is one of the most recognised of President Mugabe's post-colonial reforms. However, it is ambivalently conceptualised. For some scholars, FTLRP was a noble, well-intentioned and well-meaning undertaking that was meant to address colonial land imbalances. For others, it was a politicking gimmick meant to resuscitate a political party on the verge of extinction.

From the two standpoints, this chapter argues that while the FTLRP was wrongly timed and largely used for political expediency, was haphazardly implemented and a retaliation tool by Mugabe, it took place when it was conveniently correct for it to take place. There could be no better time than the time it took place. A plethora of literature on the FTLRP bemoans the haphazard nature of how it was implemented (Sibanda and Maposa 2014, Muzondidya 2010, Raftopoulos 2006, 2009, Mlambo 2005, 2010, Muyambo 2018). This includes its timing towards the 2000 and 2002 watershed parliamentary and presidential elections, respectively.

This chapter makes an attempt to holistically understand the FTLRP with a view to assess its strengths and weaknesses. It contends that land reform programme in post-colonial Zimbabwe was a welcome development that took place at a convenient time under the circumstances it had to take place. The chapter is not oblivious to the fact that there were grey areas that did not only make it a human rights issue, but a haphazard programme meant to politically garner votes for a party that was under a serious threat from opposition politics. The FTLRP was also a machination tool to

‘appease’ a restless populace that had been short-changed for a long time. On the whole, the chapter considers some of the key contestations on its timing as well as the *modus operandi* adopted at its inception and implementation stages. The guiding questions for the chapter are: To what extent was the FTLRP a sloganeering gimmick by Robert Mugabe? Who was meant to benefit from it? Purposive sampling procedures were used to select the research participants. The study used unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. It was carried out in A1 farms in Chipinge District of Manicaland Province.

In light of the above, this chapter seeks to holistically understand FTLRP with a view to determine whether Mugabe’s legacy could be understood from this national question. The chapter gives a trajectory survey of the land question from colonial times to date. It examines the circumstances under which the FTLRP was carried out, trouble issues around the extent to which it was a political expedience or an indigenous empowerment tool. The chapter ends by assessing land reform’s role in upholding or destroying Mugabe’s legacy.

Land distribution in Zimbabwe: A historical perspective

The land question in Zimbabwe today has a protracted history that dates back to the colonial period. Madhuku’s (2004) article, ‘Law, Politics and the land reform process in Zimbabwe’, refers to the laws that were enacted during the colonial period, such as the Land Apportionment Act, 1930; the Native Land Husbandry Act, 1951; as the critical stages to what became the land question in Zimbabwe. Madhuku (2004) further states that these pieces of legislation resulted in the establishment of the Land Commission whose mandate was to assign land and cattle to the indigenous people. Land was therefore divided into settler and ‘native’ land. The settlers took prime land which was fertile and suitable for agricultural activities whereas the indigenous people were relegated to the infertile, inhabitable and dry lands. The process was not only dehumanising but resulted in displacements that had religio-cultural, political as well as social repercussions for the displaced. People were forcibly moved away

from the graves of their 'living dead' (Mbiti 1969), traditional leadership such as local village heads and chiefs, lost its political power and the social milieu of the people was totally altered. This was violence of the highest order meted against the indigenous people by the settlers.

Having realised that the land, which Bakare (1993) conceptualises as sacred, and which determines a people's identity, history and livelihood, was gone, indigenous people engaged in a protracted liberation struggle. The struggle was about land and self-rule. The struggle was a painful epoch for the people of Zimbabwe where some people lost lives. Others were maimed, made homeless and impoverished. Despite all these, sons and daughters of the soil (*vana vevhu*) soldiered on until Zimbabwe got its political independence on 18 April 1980. The period was characterised by euphoria where Zimbabweans' hopes, and aspirations were being fulfilled (Machingura, 2012). The hopes and aspirations were that land and self-rule had come back to the people. When Robert Gabriel Mugabe became the Prime Minister, people's hopes were raised sky high. The mood was expectant as a new dispensation had been ushered in. This was the golden age of Mugabology (Machingura, 2012:208) and for Gatsheni (2009) it was a period of Mugabeism. Machingura further argues that at this period, Mugabe was, to the people, the epitome of freedoms from hunger, disease, oppression and ignorance. He became more of an agent of God (Campbell, 2003). He was their Gabriel (his middle name), the angel from God. Though for Machingura and Gatsheni, the terms Mugabology and Mugabeism, respectively, carry negative connotations for some people, they, for other people, signify positive revolutionary tradition opposed to colonialism and imperialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

True to the people's hopes and aspirations, the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) led by Mugabe saw some meaningful changes in the political and social spheres of the people. Self-rule seemed to have become a reality as the people's choice was in power. Social services greatly improved, and policies that encouraged increased student enrolment, free primary education and heavily subsidised secondary and tertiary

education, were likewise instituted. This uplifted the Zimbabweans' level of 'formal' education. It was with such hopes and aspirations that Zimbabweans anticipated that Mugabe government was going to score the same successes on the land issue. When the FTLRP was started, people thought it was going to be a huge success like the other social, political and economic successes Mugabe regime had recorded over decades. Ironically, the FTLRP was and still is a thorny issue. While notable achievements were being recorded under the leadership of Mugabe, especially in social service provision in the health and education sectors, the land question remained unresolved for decades. This was partly because of Mugabe himself and largely by the Lancaster House Constitution. Madhuku (2004) clearly intimated that the land issue remained unresolved for decades after independence due to two major factors. For him, the Lancaster House Constitution made it extremely difficult for the government of Zimbabwe to redistribute land. The Zimbabwean government lacked political and the legal muscle to address the land issue. Madhuku (2004) argues that real political power at the Lancaster House Conference lay with the British government whose avowed aim was to preserve settler privileges. It was constitutionally stated that Zimbabwe could begin addressing issues of land after a decade. Such legislation not only protected the European settlers but also made it illegal for Zimbabwean government to confiscate land from the settlers. Given this hindrance the Zimbabwe government had no alternative but to wait until it was legally ripe to make changes that would enable land redistribution. The second factor, which, in Madhuku's (2004) view, is the radical factor. It is the view that the nationalist leaders, Mugabe and Nkomo, never intended to alter, in a substantive way, the land patterns that existed at independence and were therefore contended with the *status quo* as enunciated in the British proposals at the Lancaster House Conference. Given the two factors it can be argued that the land question in Zimbabwe remained unanswered due to legal restrictions. Even if the nationalist leaders wanted to redistribute the land to the masses, it had to contend with a number of legal issues. So, what the leadership did was to buy time. In the meantime, the government embarked on a number of

amendments to the Lancaster House Constitution with the intent to avoid legal battles with the settlers on land redistribution.

FTLRP in Zimbabwe: A Brief overview

Land redistribution in Zimbabwe started with the attainment of Independence in 1980. All these years up to 2000, the *modus operandi* was characterised by slow pace due to a number of factors. The factors shall be discussed later in the chapter. This section explores land redistribution that took place from 2000 onwards. The period 2000 witnessed a lot of activity and movement in terms of land acquisition.

Scholars like Raftopoulos (2006) and Mlambo (2005) concur that the late 1990s and after 2000 period was marked by the growth of civic movement and the emergence of stronger opposition politics. This was a period that saw the birth of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by the late Morgan Tsvangirai, the formation of National Constitutional Assembly led by Lovemore Madhuku, and many other Human Rights activist groups and labour unions like the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) from which MDC was an offshoot. The coming into the political arena of many of these organisations raised a lot of political temperature. Since the indigenous people's livelihoods have terribly deteriorated owing to mistimed implementation of government policies such as the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of 1991-1993, the MDC, NCA and the ZCTU's ideologies were embraced by the people as their only hope for survival.

Prior to the period of MDC and NCA formations, the British government had reneged on its earlier promise to fund land redistribution (Mlambo 2005). Britain had even stopped giving money earmarked for land redistribution. Where the money was disbursed it was given through civic organisations and not through government institutions. This did not only anger Mugabe government but made it feel cornered.

To further worsen the political arena, the year 2000 saw a rejection of the government constitution, where land issues such as

compulsory land acquisition were to be dealt with once and for all. The No vote referendum is alleged to have been successful because of the settler farmers and their workers who assisted the MDC and NCA in campaigning against the referendum. Mlambo (2005, 2010), Raftopoulos (2006, 2009) and Madhuku (2004) allege that settler farmers and their farm workers and the popularity of the MDC played a pivotal role in the No Vote. The referendum defeat ignited ZANU-PF's anger more for it was its first time to test a devastating defeat of that nature.

It is against this backdrop that FTLRP took place in 2000. It was a spontaneous land repossession that got a number of terminology such as *jambanja*, Third *Chimurenga*, (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014; Mlambo, 2005) and *bondo yeminda*, popularised by Chingaira's (Cde Chinx) song by the same name. Sibanda and Maposa (2014) argue that the war veterans of the second *Chimurenga* and the long disgruntled landless people initiated the land reform programme in February 2000. The land reform kicked off in Mashonaland east led by chief Svosve (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014). This was followed by a series of land invasions throughout the country. The seizures were done through a force that was code-named *jambanja*. Sibanda and Maposa trace the popular use of the term *jambanja* to a hit song by Marko Sibanda, *jambanja pahotera*. This is where cheating wives and husbands met unexpectedly at a Harare hotel. In the song a man had an adulterous affair with a truck driver's wife. Upon realising this the truck driver got also into an adulterous affair with the man's (who initially had an adulterous affair with his wife) wife as a way of retaliating. Unknowingly to each other's plans, the adulterous couples booked at a Harare hotel. The next day morning when they were on the corridors to the bathrooms, the couples came face to face half-dressed. Upon realising that each man had the other man's wife, there was a fierce fighting. The hotel staff tried to stop them but to no avail. The police had to be called in to stop the chaos. The couples were taken to the police station where all the 'secrets' were exposed. This is what Sibanda referred to *jambanja pahotera*. There was not only chaos but physical violence at the hotel. The haphazard nature of the land invasions was likened to what happened at the hotel in Sibanda's

song. It, too, is characterised by chaos and violence in its various forms.

The ZANU-PF government remained silent while the land invasions were taking place. Settler farmers were removed from their farms and farm houses. Those who resisted were either maimed or were allegedly killed. *Jambanja* gained widespread international attention since 2000, with the world divided between those who supported the ‘forceful’ commercial land takeover actions of the government of Zimbabwe and those opposed to the actions for a variety of reasons (Matondi, 2012). Initially and in the eyes of the majority, FTLRP was meant to correct past wrongs. When did FTLRP become a political gimmick is the preoccupation of the next section.

When did land redistribution become political sloganeering?

To answer this question this section focuses on the circumstances that led Mugabe’s government embark on the FTLRP fast track land reform. Mugabe’s prime years as Prime Minister and President took a tumble in the late 1990s. This was necessitated by several factors that his government was responsible for as well as those factors that were beyond his government’s control. The factors ranged from political, economic and social ones. Politically, the government of Zimbabwe had not addressed the ‘national land question’ (Raftopoulos 2006). The land issue had remained unresolved and voices of discontentment were beginning to be audible. Although the government was addressing it under the willing seller-willing buyer (Madhuku 2004) basis, the pace at which that was being done was not satisfactory to the masses. Some sections of society felt the government was dragging its feet in decisively dealing with the national land question. Others thought that the government was insensitive to their call for land, the finite resource (Madhuku, 2004, Mlambo, 2010). The late 1990s were equally economically strained. The economic situation was bad as the government had misfired by introducing the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) at the advice of the Bretton Woods institutions, the

International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. This resulted in a social malaise where people became poorer (Moretti, 2017, Makoni, 2000, Kawewe and Dibie, 2000). Makoni (2000), for example, lamented the high pupil dropout from schools, especially girls because of ESAP.

The same period, that is around 1997/8, saw civil restlessness. The labour unions led by Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) embarked on a series of stay-aways that further paralysed the economy. The stay-aways were meant to force government address the worsening labour working conditions. This was coupled with the general loss of the lack of willingness by government to address constitutional issues. The generality of the people felt that Mugabe had too much power that they needed clipped (Moretti 2017). As the call for a new constitution gathered momentum led by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Mugabe government responded by setting a counter commission, the National Constitutional Commission (NCC) that was meant to work on the constitution. The commission produced what it called a People's Constitution which was then put to a referendum in 2000. The NCA and other civic organisations as well as political movements such as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) joined hands in campaigning for a No vote (Raftopoulos 2006, 2009) in the referendum. Disgruntled settler farmers whose land was under threat from being acquired joined in the No vote campaign urging their workers to vote against the constitution. The result was that the constitution was rejected by the people. This angered Mugabe who, in my view, had the right to respond. For his government, the political landscape had changed, and it therefore needed a paradigm shift in terms of government policies and *modus operandi*. The defeat in the 2000 referendum was the first of its own kind since ZANU got into power in 1980. This meant that politically, it was no longer business as usual for Mugabe and his government. The formation of the MDC in the same year was a game changer in the politics of Zimbabwe. With the impending 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential plebiscites, respectively, Mugabe, who had learnt lessons from the results of the 2000 constitution referendum, swiftly moved

into either whip ‘offenders’ (those responsible for the referendum loss) into line (Raftopoulos, 2006, 2009; Mlambo, 2010). He also had to quickly appease the restless war veterans (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014) by embarking on FTLRP which, according to government, was meant to redress the land question that had been on the cards for a very long time.

Politicking or genuine empowerment drive? Views from the academy

The land reform programme was intensified from 2000 onwards. This was twenty years after Zimbabwe had gained its [political] independence from Britain. Scholars understand FTLRP differently and this section of the chapter intends to present the divergent views. The questions this section of the chapter attempts to answer are: Who was meant to benefit from the ‘fast track’? Was the timing wrong? These are the questions that scholars are battling with in their attempt to holistically understand FTLRP in Zimbabwe.

Raftopoulos (2006, 2009) understands FTLRP as one of the key pillars of the ‘Zimbabwean crises’. Debates about FTLRP are premised on two arguments. The arguments are that land reform in Zimbabwe was a welcome development meant to redress an imbalance that was created at the colonisation of Zimbabwe and that it was a human right violation meant to punish perceived enemies of the nation. Literature on these two presented arguments is plenty but this chapter attempts to combine the two arguments in order to argue that FTLRP in Zimbabwe is a complex phenomenon that calls for an open mind to critically assess its ramifications. It is an emotive policy that the Zimbabwean government undertook in 2000. Most scholars have looked at FTLRP from an outside perspective and in most of the cases very little is appreciated about the policy. The land reform programme has been viewed mostly from a blame-game perspective where, as Mlambo (2010) argues, the Mugabe regime is blamed for the chaos and plunder associated with FTLRP, the European settler farmers are blamed for their uncalled-for resistance to land acquisition and the British government and its allies are also blamed

for failing to fulfil the pledges made at Lancaster House Conference and other preceding conferences. The British government had promised to unveil funds to facilitate the transfer of land ownership from the settler farmers to the Zimbabwean populace. This did not happen.

On why it took long to address the land question in Zimbabwe, Madhuku (2004) condones the Mugabe regime. For him, there were a number of legal issues Mugabe regime had to content with before his government could compulsorily take land from the minority settler farmers to the indigenous majority. As provided for in the Lancaster House Constitution the Zimbabwean government could not acquire land before ten years had elapsed (Madhuku, 2004, Mlambo; 2005, 2010; Raftopoulos, 2006, 2009). Meanwhile the willing buyer-willing-seller model had to apply. When the ten years elapsed the willing- buyer, willing-seller arrangement had not yielded much. The phrases ‘willing-buyer, willing-seller’ meant that the transaction had to take place on two variables. There was need for the presence of a willing buyer as well as a willing seller. Given how the indigenous majority and their government lacked financial resources, getting land on this basis was practically impossible. The land was supposed to be bought on the market price (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014), a clause in the Lancaster Constitution that required payment in pounds. Additionally, the settler farmers dragged their feet because initially they did not even want to let the land back to the indigenous people (Mlambo, 2010, Raftopoulos 2006). All these impediments resulted in that the rate at which land could be bought was very slow. This explains why the land redistribution in Zimbabwe took too long to address.

As to the beneficiaries of FTLRP, divergent views are given. Critics of the Mugabe regime argue that FTLRP was never meant to benefit the general Zimbabwean populace, but rather the emerging Black ‘land barons’ and those close to then President Mugabe such as cabinet ministers, governors, top civil servants, diplomats and service defence chiefs (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014, *The Zimbabwean* 2009). For Mlambo (2010), FTLRP was meant for ZANU-PF thugs who used the race card to take land from the settler farmers. To

further illustrate the cronyism associated with FTLRP, scholars (Matondi 2012; Marongwe, 2003; Zamchiya, 2011) argue that land allocation process was chaotic, permeated by violence and self-serving interests through self-allocation of land by the well-to-do. This points to the fact that not everyone benefitted from the FTLRP. Land was allocated on partisan lines. This is why FTLRP was heavily criticised by opposition parties such as MDC. For the MDC, FTLRP was a ZANU-PF project meant to only benefit ZANU-PF supporters and politicians. Moretti (2013) captures this when he argues that Mugabe's officials and supporters occupied the majority of commercial farms, whilst the majority of indigenous people remained excluded.

The FTLRP took place after a series of events such as the rejection of the government's constitution, formation of MDC (Raftopoulos, 2009), coupled with the resurgence of civic opposition such as the NCA. It is against this background that FTLRP is understood to be a response to a series of events that had taken Mugabe regime by surprise. Raftopoulos (2009) argues that in response to the referendum defeat, a series of land occupations ensued. In the same vein, Mlambo (2005) avers that it is true that ZANU-PF exploited the land issue in order to score political points and to stave off a growing political challenge from the MDC. Views on the long time it took to address the land question, who were the beneficiaries of FTLRP as well as the timing of the programme remain divergent. What remains clear is that land redistribution took too long to implement, selected few benefitted more than others and it took place as a response to a series of events that were threatening the ZANU-PF government.

To illustrate that land redistribution in Zimbabwe was a thorny issue characterised by a number of factors, it is prudent for the chapter to discuss some of the sticky issues such as the roles played by the British government, the settler farmers and Mugabe regime in land redistribution in Zimbabwe. The following section looks at the said factors.

The British empty promises and shenanigans

To begin with the British government never liked the Zimbabwean government to take back their land. This is evident in the proposals that it made at the Lancaster House Conference. It never negotiated in good faith. The provisions of the Lancaster Constitution were skewed towards the protection and privileging the settler farmers. Mlambo (2005) is instructive when he argues that the British government contributed to the persistence of the land problem in Zimbabwe by only funding the post-colonial land reform half-heartedly. They did not unveil all the funds that they promised would. Even though some money was given to the Zimbabwean government, it was not enough to fund such a grand exercise. Because of mistrust between British government and Zimbabwean administration, the former channelled the money through third parties like non-governmental organisations to address the land issue. This was not agreeable to the Zimbabwean administration which became suspicious of activities of NGOs. For example, in 2008 a number of NGOs operating licences were withdrawn. Chitongo (2013) points out that NGOs that were apolitical attracted little adverse from the Zimbabwean government while those thought to delve into politics were faced with greater repression. The resultant bickering resulted in a sluggish pace at which the land question was being addressed. As this hide and seek game ensued the Zimbabwean populace was becoming impatient and restless for they saw nothing beneficial from the liberation struggle (Matondi, 2012, Marongwe, 2003).

However, the unwillingness of the British government should not be simplistically viewed as an attempt to frustrate and derail land reform. It is prudent to view it as an attempt to protect and jealously safeguard the interests of the British kin and kith. It must be remembered that for decades the settler farmers had immensely benefited from agriculture in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. Although the settler farmers had amassed for themselves huge profits from other ventures such as mining, agricultural activities remained the major contributor to such profits. Unconfirmed claims are that few years

after independence, Ian Smith is alleged to have sarcastically said that there was no need to wage a protracted war in Zimbabwe if Africans only wanted to have political power. He could have given them political power without bloodshed had he known that what indigenous Zimbabweans and their leadership only wanted was political power. Oral tradition has it that Smith was alleged to have said this after realising that when Zimbabwe got independence, the leaders were worried about being political leaders and not economic leaders. This is confirmed by Mnangagwa who in 2018, 38 years after independence, is emphasising economics more than politics in his campaigns for the July 30, 2018 plebiscite. What he means is that the past 38 years have been of political leadership not economic leadership hence the paradigm shift he purports to bring to Zimbabwean politics. He emphasises more economics and less politics in his 'Zimbabwe is open for Business' mantra.

This chapter, therefore, argues that blaming the British government for its reluctance to let go the land is understandable if one tries to understand it from their perspective. The settler farmers could not let go all the luxuries they had enjoyed for decades. They were in their comfort zones and trying to remove them from such zones would certainly be met with a lot of resistance as evidenced by their shenanigans. Anyone could have done what the British government did in protecting its sons and daughters whose interests in Zimbabwe were at stake. To uncritically blame the British government for the land problems in Zimbabwe is to wilfully ignore that it would not make an economic sense for the British government to make their kin and kith lose land to indigenous Zimbabweans. Land was the source of their livelihoods and denying them access to the land was like suffocating them. Land was their means for survival. I am not saying they were right, but this could be the reason for the reluctance.

The European settler farmers

Some scholars (Madhuku, 2004; Mlambo, 2005, 2010) are quick to blame the European settler farmers for the land problem in

Zimbabwe. They are justified in doing so but this section wants to understand why the settler farmers behaved the way they did and continue to do. While I do not intend to applaud them, I think attempts to understand what they did from their perspective is helpful for a better understanding of how the land issue must have been dealt with.

In addition to a number of restriction that the British government put on the Zimbabwean government through the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution, the settler farmers were equally reluctant to let go the land on which they had unlimited privileges. They had a negative attitude towards the Zimbabwean government to redistribute land. Mlambo (2005) avers that the farmers had a rather myopic and intransigent attitude towards land reform. Instead of being pro-active in finding ways of sharing the land, they challenged FTLRP in courts. This did not only result in obstructionist shenanigans but in antagonistic tendencies meant to thwart efforts to redistribute the land. Even if the settler farmers were aware that the land issue had always been at the root of African grievances in the colonial era (Mlambo 2005:8), they insisted on the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution of the 'willing buyer, willing seller' basis and the market price clause.

In instances where the government could follow the provisions of willing-buyer, willing-seller, the farmers made available land which was not suitable for agriculture and human habitation. They made available "...sub-standard or marginal land in low rainfall areas, incapable of sustaining crop agriculture" (Mlambo, 2005:9). They even converted some of the idle land, land that was not under use, into ranching. This was not done in order to meaningfully rear animals but as a way to prevent indigenous people from getting what could be perceived as underutilised land. Ranching was, therefore, carried out in order to give the impression that the land was being profitably utilised. What it meant is that for the settler farmers, animals were better than indigenous people who wanted land for their livelihoods. It is such insensitivities and a high sense of intransigence that did not only anger the ruling government but the general populace. Had the settler farmers realised that the land

question was an emotive and highly charged issue, they could have avoided FTLRP by simply complying and cooperating with the Zimbabwean government. They could have shared amicably their land with the Zimbabwe government for redistribution to its people (Mlambo, 2010). But instead, they remained arrogant and adamant until FTLRP had to be enforced upon them or rather 'fast-tracked' for time was running out for the government. It can be argued that the political atmosphere obtaining at the time of FTLRP was the catalyst for FTLRP. The coming on the political scene of the MDC, to which the settler farmers were allegedly inclined (Mlambo 2005, 2010, Raftopoulos 2006) as well as the 2000 No referendum vote made FTLRP inevitable for the ZANU-PF government. Whether settler farmers then wanted to comply or not, FTLRP was on cards. Mugabe government wanted to punish settler farmers for having aligned themselves with MDC and having urged their farm workers to vote against the proposed government constitution. The settler farmers understood FTLRP as a political tool meant to punish them (Moretti, 2017). Most of the views on the settler farmers' perspective on FTLRP are coming from their sympathisers who understand FTLRP as a human right violation.

Be that as it may, the settler farmers' behaviour is equally understandable. They behaved in the manner they did so as to protect land privileges that they had enjoyed for decades. They were also making huge profits off the land and they did not want to lose 'their' land for free as espoused by the FTLRP. All the shenanigans, Lancaster House Constitution restrictions, challenging land acquisition in courts, selling unproductive land to Zimbabweans, were meant to frustrate the Zimbabwean government so that it could leave them alone to continue enjoying the privileges that had accrued to them over years. They (settler farmers) too were partly to blame for not only delaying the process but also making it turn violent in the end. Had they complied, the FTLRP could have been a different scenario altogether.

The Mugabe Regime

The British government and the settler farmers' actions were met with appropriate responses from the Mugabe regime. Having tried to use legal means to acquire land (having waited for a decade as provided for in the Lancaster House Constitution), the Mugabe regime increasingly got incensed by the obstructionist tendencies of the settler farmers and their British government back home. This period was also characterised by the increasing demand for land by the majority of Zimbabweans. As the Zimbabwean populace gathered momentum pressuring government to address the national question that prompted the waging of the liberation struggle, the settler farmers grew more resistant and were even alleged to have joined the opposition voices in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and other civic pressure groups that blamed government for violating human rights as if the settler farmers were the only ones deserving human rights (Mlambo, 2010). In 2000, land 'invasions' took place led by war veterans. The invasions were without incidents. Allegations are that those farmers who resisted were either killed, injured or maimed by the angry mobs.

In this regard, Mugabe's land reform policy was taunted as 'land grab' (Mlambo 2005) and '*jambanja*' (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014) implying that it was violent, coercive, chaotic as well as a policy that was devoid of the rule of law. Mugabe was, therefore, presented as 'a heartless villain' (Mlambo 2005:2) for having made available land to the landless Zimbabweans. It appears people easily forgot how the same land was taken from the indigenous people by the settlers. It was violently taken away and Rekai Tangwena and his people are a testimony of how violent the 'land grab' by the settlers was (Magaisa, 2010, Marowa, 2015). The indigenous people were forcibly removed from their traditional lands and as earlier on alluded to. This had serious effects on the cultural, religious and social milieu of the people. In fact, the forced movements from the people's traditional lands was violence of the highest order. This was 'land grab' of unprecedented proportions. To then argue and say Mugabe regime was insensitive, a human rights violator and villainous is to fail to

appreciate, as Mlambo (2005) argues, the role that the land question played in shaping the historical trajectory of Zimbabwe since that day in 1890 when Rhodes' envoys, members of the Pioneer Column, raised the Union Jack at the then Fort Salisbury and claimed the land between the Limpopo and the Zambezi as a British colony.

Having been pressed against a hard surface and a rock, where people's land demand was increasingly becoming louder and louder after decades of patience and the settler farmers' uncooperativeness, Mugabe had no choice but to let people get their land back. This was a political survival strategy given the fact that FTLRP coincided with a lot of changes on the political arena (such as the formation of the MDC and the unexpected 2000 constitution referendum loss and the general economic decline). Mugabe's action must be equally understood holistically. Having been cornered by events of the time he had to turn to land to salvage political survival for his party and his leadership.

However, pan- Africanist scholars like Mlambo (2005, 2010) and Raftopoulos (2006, 2009) would argue that Mugabe had promises to fulfil and a people to serve as their leader. The needful had to be done against all odds. He had to answer the land question that had been unanswered for decades after independence. In short, Mugabe had a political position to maintain and a people to serve. Although in a bid to serve the people, the Mugabe regime got itself entangled in vices such as nepotism, corruption as well as greediness, to then argue that FTLRP was only a political expediency is to deliberately forget that Mugabe had a political mandate to fulfil to millions of Zimbabwe emanating from the liberation struggle. If a leader could therefore sense, as Mugabe did, that he was sitting on a political bomb that could explode to his disadvantage, that is a sign of political astuteness and shrewdness. Pan- Africanists argue that Mugabe, therefore, cannot be wholly blamed for what then became the Zimbabwe crisis- the redistribution of land since the turn of the New Millennium. Duty had called, and he had to answer to the call, and that is exactly what he did. Given the above scenario, who, then, was wrong in FTLRP? The next section attempts an answer to this question.

Who, then, was right and wrong?

This section of the chapter is not meant to point fingers at anyone but to critically look at the land reform dynamics in Zimbabwe from a number of perspectives. There is a tendency to look at land reform in Zimbabwe from camps where people identify with certain ideologies and argue from their respective cocoons. The above section has tried to justify why the British government, settler farmers and the Mugabe regime behaved the way they did. Notwithstanding the fact that the three factors – British government factor, settler farmers factor and the Mugabe regime factor– have their share of contribution to the Zimbabwean FTLRP quagmire, it must be stated that the blame game does not help the situation either. The British government did what it did to save its own interests, so were the white farmers and Mugabe regime's. Whilst each one of these three factors to the FTLRP could be either right or wrong, depending on where one looks at it from, I want to look at the Mugabe regime factor with the intention to establish why he did what he did. Was it right or wrong?

Like said earlier on, scholarship is not agreeable on the judgement whether Mugabe was right or wrong on embarking on FTLRP. For some he was outrightly wrong for allowing FTLRP, code-named 'The Third *Chimurenga*' (Sibanda and Maposa 2014, Mlambo 2005, 2010). For others, Mugabe truly demonstrated his pan-Africanist ideology by redistributing land to the landless. This chapter intends to add to this debate by bringing in voices of the ordinary men and women who could have benefitted and those who could not have benefitted from the FTLRP. The men and women's views were collected through in-depth interviews. To assess whether Mugabe was wrong or right, the next section discusses Mugabe, the man, as either a hero or a villain.

Mugabe: Antics of a Hero?

Given the odds at stake involving how arduous land redistribution exercise in Zimbabwe was, the long-time taken to

squarely deal with the land question is justified. It had to take that long in order to ensure that all due processes and procedures were exhausted. Notwithstanding the obstacles, Mugabe navigated his way until land was made available to the masses. The interviews with settled farmers indicated that Mugabe became a people's hero when he took land. People began to realise their dreams and many of them got into serious farming not only for their subsistence but for commercial production. The people I interviewed were upbeat about land reform which they heartily attribute to the child of the soil (*mwana wewhu*), Mugabe. The people confessed that they were now *macadamia* farmers, which used to be a monopoly for the settler farmers. Some were into maize, soya-beans and sugar cane farming. The interviews revealed that the people's social and economic lives have changed. They could build decent accommodation, send children to schools, boarding schools for that matter which were beyond their reach before farming, buy vehicles to ease challenges related to the transportation of their produce and make savings from their sales. The settled farmers metaphorically and biblically referred to their land as 'Canaan', the biblical land of milk and honey. This meant they were extremely happy about the FTLRP. They attributed this to Mugabe and his leadership. One interviewee had this to say:

Honestly speaking Zimbabweans are a blessed people to have a leader like Mugabe. He is a leader with the plight of his people at his heart. Look at this (pointing to a piece of land with *macadamia* plants). Have you ever seen a leader who has brought this kind of wealth to ordinary citizens like me? Mugabe is our Moses who brought us from Egypt into Canaan (Chaire, 2018).

The above submission is a clear expression of the sense of joy and exhilaration that engulfed FTLRP beneficiaries. For people like the interviewee above, Mugabe is not only a hero but a hero *par excellence*.

The venture into farming by the local Zimbabweans did not only change their livelihoods but aided in a way to Mugabe prolonged stay in power. For the new farmers Mugabe was a larger than life figure

who had the plight of the Zimbabweans at heart. Although opposition parties complained of vote rigging, one must also acknowledge that with the land redistribution policy beginning to bear fruit for some Zimbabweans, chances of Mugabe getting unprecedented support were also high. Without wanting to dismiss the opposition parties' suspicion on vote rigging, land reform programme under the FTLRP was Mugabe's trump card to garner rural support. The interviews indicated that people were prepared to vote for Mugabe as long as he lived. Another interviewee categorically eulogised Mugabe era thus:

Mugabe ndiye mutungamiriri wakabva kudenga uye unofemerwa ngemweya unoera waMwari. Zvaakatiitira pandaa yevhu zvakaoma. Kudai Mwari vamungwarira uye ticharamba teimvhotera dakara denge ramutora. (Loosely translated as: Mugabe is a leader from the heavens and he is possessed the Holy Spirit. He did us proud by giving us land. May God keep him. We shall continue voting for him until God takes him). (Chisiya 2018).

Most of the interviewees indicated that they could not think of another leader who would look after them like their hero, Mugabe. To buttress this thinking among the populace, Mlambo (2010:41) admits that people sang praises to the Mugabe government for having rescued them from the meagre existence in the Communal Areas (CAs) where they had merely scratched a living for so long.

Mugabe, himself, did not only become a darling for the Zimbabwean populace but the envy of other countries in the region and even in many parts of Africa. Most African countries had dismally failed to address the land question in their respective countries and this has courted serious bickering in their parliaments. For example, Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF) party is vociferous in the South African parliament about land redistribution. Zimbabwe has become the model for land redistribution in Africa and during his tenure as president of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Mugabe used to get huge support from people of any African country he visited. To substantiate the heroic nature of Mugabe, Roy Bennett, who was a settler farmer in

Chimanimani District in Manicaland Province and a member of the MDC before he relocated to South Africa and died in a plane crash in Canada, admitted that the whites were guilty of being opportunistic, looking after themselves, not looking beyond their comfort zones (Jardine, 2003). This is an implicit acknowledgement that what the Mugabe government did was not 'badly wrong' to use Jardine's phrase.

To further illustrate that the FTLRP in Zimbabwe was a welcome development whose initiators must be applauded, the president of the MDC Alliance, Nelson Chamisa admitted at rallies held in March-May 2018 that there would be no going back on the land issue. He promised his supporters that what his government would do was to carry out a land audit in order to see who owned more farms with the intention to equitably redistribute the finite resource, land, to all deserving people of the nation. Addressing a rally at Chegutu on 5 May 2018, Chamisa assured his supporters that when he forms his government he would not remove those allocated land but would ensure they are given title deeds. He would introduce what he called 'smart agriculture' which would focus on value addition and beneficiation through the employment of modernisation and sustainability agricultural models. The debate in opposition parties is not about land reform reversal but addressing certain anomalies that happened during FTLRP. This is evidence enough to argue that FTLRP is an accepted policy by majority of Zimbabweans across the political divide. Disagreements may be on its *modus operandi*, but the overarching feeling is that FTLRP was "correcting past wrongs of a greedy land grab" (Mlambo 2005:15) by the settler regime.

There are arguments that Mugabe government used FTLRP in order to resuscitate his waning political fortunes. Scholars like Raftopoulos (2006), Mlambo (2005, 2010) and Muzondidya (2010) argue that Mugabe used FTLRP to counter the mounting pressure for the demand of land from war veterans and ordinary people. Raftopoulos (2006) states that Mugabe introduced FTLRP as the black empowerment tool in order to reaffirm his party's legitimacy and to squash the emergence of a formidable opposition. For these scholars, Mugabe used the race card (Mlambo 2010), pan-Africanist

ideology and black empowerment gimmicks using the FTLRP to ensure that his party got majority votes in elections. Interviews with settled farmers revealed that although these scholars view the FTLRP in this light, the real beneficiaries of FTLRP greatly differ. For them, Mugabe was a pan-Africanist *par-excellence* who wanted to fulfil the main reason why Africans waged war against the colonial settlers. The giving of land to the indigenous majority, according to these interviewees, had nothing to do with political expediency. It was purely meant to address or rather correct a past wrong committed by the colonial settler regime. It is for this reason that Mugabe is, in the opinions of the interviewees, a pan-Africanist who gave land as an empowering tool for the black people. This made Mugabe a national, regional, continental and international leader who sent shivers into his opponents when he took the podium to speak at international foras. Although there are views that most of the beneficiaries were supporters or functionaries of ZANU-PF, whose views could be impartial, Moretti (2017) objects this by arguing that the view is premised on generalisations. The claims that it was ZANU-PF cronies who only benefitted from FTLRP lack evidence. Given the spontaneous nature the FTLRP took, it is foolhardy to assume that all who took part in the *jambanja* were partisan to ZANU-PF. Chances were high that even those people who were apolitical benefitted from FTLRP. Research indicated that some of the settled farmers were members of the opposition parties and that others were not even members of any political party.

This chapter, though without dismissing possibilities of members of the ZANU-PF getting land on partisan lines, argues that simply labelling Mugabe and his government as land grabbers by claiming that FTLRP was based on partisanship and cronyism fails to recognise the benefits that accrued to the Zimbabweans whose livelihoods have changed. Zimbabweans have taken farming into tobacco, sugarcane, cotton, wheat and citrus fruit farming. These areas of farming used to be wholly owned by settler farmers. Coupled by the Command Agriculture Mugabe introduced in the 2016-17 farming season, the farmers made a fortune. There were bumper harvests that saw families realising huge profits. This is black

empowerment. Mugabe's mantra: Land is the economy and the economy is land is bearing fruit as we observe loads of trucks from tobacco floors carrying property like scotchcarts, beds, solar panels, roofing asbestos farmers would have bought after selling their tobacco.

Even though his opponents, like human rights activists, further dismiss him as a villain who manipulated FTLRP to respond to the rise of the MDC as well as a punitive measure to settler farmers for being funders of the MDC, evidence is there for all to see that with FTLRP the indigenous people were empowered through land. His critics also blame the timing of the invasions but as earlier on mentioned, this was the right time. The timing coincided with other events but that could not stop Mugabe and his government to embark on a noble policy that was meant to change people's livelihoods.

Mugabe's alleged villainous antics

However, Mugabe's reign is alleged to have been that long due to his villainous antics. FTLRP became a tool to quench his insatiable appetite for power. The defeat in the 2000 Constitution referendum, the formation of the MDC and the general breakdown of the economy made Mugabe ruthless (Moretti, 2017; Matondi, 2012; Mlambo, 2010, 2005; Raftopoulos 2006, 2009).

The *modus operandi* of FTLRP was so chaotic and haphazard that scholars (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014, Mlambo, 2005) code-named it *jambanja*. The term, apart from its association with Sibanda's song (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014), as earlier on discussed, denotes violence, force and ruthlessness. The land invasions were so confrontational that in some instances the settler farmers and their workers were maimed. Mlambo (2010) admits that Mugabe regime trampled on human rights and pushed through a chaotic policy that ruined the country's hitherto viable agricultural economy.

During the land invasions we witnessed settler farmers forcibly marched out of their farm houses with nothing. They left their property such as farm equipment like tractors and combine

harvesters as well as their animals like cattle. This emphasises the villainous nature of the land seizures. Mugabe, being the leader, was responsible for the plunder that characterised FTLRP. For that reason, Sibanda and Maposa (2014) refer to this behaviour as a period of *lootcracy* (that is looting and plundering of the settler farmers' property) as opposed to democracy.

Does the end justify the means? Mugabe's crushing end

Does the old saying that "the end justifies the means" hold any truth on Mugabe era? Does his legacy have anything to do with what he faced on 22 November 2017? (This is a date that changed the political direction of Zimbabwe. On this day Mugabe resigned due to pressure mounted by the people in the streets led by the army and the impeachment proceedings that were underway at the House of Assembly). Is Mugabe's end of an era lamentable or celebratory? These are the questions this section attempts to address in a bid to assess Mugabe's legacy.

Having withered the daunting challenges posed by the settler farmers who used all sorts of shenanigans to resist land reform, the mounting oppositional politics and the general free fall of the economy, Mugabe became a hero *par excellence*. How he withered these challenges that threatened his position as state president is a subject for another day. With everyone thinking Mugabe had become invincible and with everyone having a feeling that he would rule for life, the 18 November 2017 protests against his leadership by the general populace led by the army came as a surprise for some people. For others the writing on the wall was clear and loud that his days as state president were numbered. The army argued that ZANU-PF as a revolutionary party was under siege by the late-comers (*mafikozolo*) while genuine party cadres like the war veterans were sidelined. The army felt that it had the mandate to restore ZANU-PF legacy by removing criminals that had captured not only the state but the state president as well. The army then intervened. With the assistance of the general populace and opposition organisations, it took power. Mugabe lost the grandeur and charisma he used to have. He lost his

power. This was the fall with a thud of a giant. As to the constitutionality of what happened is beyond the purview of this chapter. The fact remains that Mugabe lost his power under the said circumstances.

A lot of things had happened in ZANU-PF that had made the situation potentially volatile. In 2014 a group of the members of the party, code-named *Gamatox*, had been dismissed from the party including the then woman Vice President, Joyce Mujuru. She was alleged to have been the leader of the group that was positioning itself to wrestle power from Mugabe. The same scenario happened in late October 2017 when Emmerson Mnangagwa, another Vice President, was unceremoniously dismissed for allegedly wanting to take power from Mugabe. He was alleged to be leading *Lacoste* that was in a fierce succession battle with *Generation 40* (G40). All these events were threatening a revolutionary party's legacy. Certain members of the party were alleged to be the ones causing all the dismissals and the restlessness in the party.

Does this event take away the legacy that Mugabe had built for himself, his party and the nation? The answer, in my view, is an affirmative No. What Mugabe had done for himself, that is towering as a hero, a true child of the soil (dating back to the days of the liberation struggle), a pan-Africanist and a champion of black empowerment is not easy to forget.

The above events including those dating back as far as around the 90s where the social, economic and political fortunes of the country took a tumble, were indicative of events to come. With Mugabe's insistence on power despite the voices of discontentment within his own party, the writing was on the wall. It is because of these events that it has become extremely difficult to talk of Mugabe legacy without incidents. For some people his legacy towers up to today while for others the legacy has been done a heavy blow by Mugabe himself.

For those who argue that his legacy still lingers months after his departure continue to link him to a new political party formed, National People Front (NPF) led by Ambrose Mutinhiri. For this school of thought, Mugabe's shadow still lingers and is alleged to be

the brains behind its formation. The fact that he is still associated with active politics means that he still has a following.

Closely looking at this, it can be argued that it is the beneficiaries of his policies in ZANU-PF who still have an affinity with Mugabe. It is arguable that Mugabe made a legacy and destroyed it himself because of his insatiate appetite for power. For this school of thought it is what Mugabe did that led to his demise. His authoritarian grip to power that involved ruthless dealing with perceived enemies, his populist policies that yielded no deliverables for the people as well as his overstay on power made him more villainous than a hero. The said vices led to his removal from power by the people led by the army and the parliament of Zimbabwe that was instituting impeachment proceedings when he resigned from being the president. Is this not a case of being a hero into a zero? How much damage did this have on his legacy? The questions form part of the concluding section of the chapter.

Conclusions

The chapter makes a number of arguments that have resulted in my heading for this section conclusions and not conclusion. It is in this section that I conclude the issues that were raised in the chapter. The following are the conclusions the chapter makes.

Firstly, FTLRP in Zimbabwe came about because of the history behind Zimbabwe, as a nation. Zimbabwe fought a protracted liberation struggle to attain both political and economic independence. Economic independence could not be possible without addressing the land question. It was, therefore, imperative for land reform to take place. This means FTLRP was a necessary undertaking to address the colonial land imbalances. Why it had to be ‘fast-tracked’ was premised on the unnecessary delays that were involved. Suffice to mention here that FTLRP was equally driven by the need to react to the No Vote and the MDC threat by the ZANU-PF government whose grip on power was at stake. At the time of writing this chapter, the land issue has not been fully settled. It is still going on with promises from the incumbent government that it has

to audit land so as to avoid multiple ownership of land when others do not have.

Secondly, Mugabe government could be forgiven for the *modus operandi* it employed in taking the land. It is alleged to have been violent, blind to human rights issues and insensitive, but people forget how the settler farmers took it from the indigenous majority. Given the British government and the settler farmers' attitude, Mugabe administration had no choice but to use the means at its disposal to ensure that justice in terms of land ownership was done. As a government of the people, by the people and for the people the Harare administration had to deliver on the liberation struggle promises. Top on the liberation struggle promise list was the issue of land redistribution. Whether Mugabe government benefitted in land redistribution to garner unprecedented support *vis-à-vis* other political players, what is evidently clear is that his government fulfilled a promise made during the struggle. The timing could have been coincidental. Land had to be taken back to its rightful owners and indeed it was given. Whether the means to acquire land could be viewed as being villainous on the part of the government, what is fundamentally important is that past wrongs, human rights violation perpetuated by the settler farmers and the colonial administration have been corrected. This earns Mugabe a hero *par excellence* status whose achievements against failures could be weighed favourably.

Thirdly, I conclude that Mugabe legacy is shrouded by controversies where it can be argued that he created a legacy that he destroyed himself. His tenure of office was too long to successfully navigate all the challenges that confront a government. His long stay in power gave Zimbabweans the opportunity to see his brighter and darker sides thereby acting as lessons as to how Zimbabwe must be governed going forward.

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Mugabe the Hero Who Became a Villain: The Tragicomedy of the Legacy of Mugabe

Nkwazi Nkuzi Mhango

Mugabe has made a mockery of the democratic governance at the heart of our value system. His isn't the naked power grab common to autocrats. He, instead stage-manages a perverse parody of democratic choice, by organizing utterly unfair elections whose excesses in violence, intimidation and propaganda would make Tammany Hall ward bosses blush (Kinsman, 2008: 6).

Introduction

Kinsman's assertion above helps us to look into the personal and political lives of Robert Gabriel Mugabe Matibili, a chauvinistic colossus who intimately and practically bestrode and towered over Zimbabwe's, Africa's and World's politics for over three intermittent decades changing shapes and style from time to time. For over three decades, Mugabe was a fixture in regional and international geopolitics as well as *realpolitik* globally thanks to his pugnacious and obnoxious style of dealing with others. When I look at Mugabe, the first image I get is of a pragmatic politician who would easily and shrewdly interact with anybody to get what he wanted. I see an adventuresome-like politician whose ever-changing styles of leadership and shenanigans are superb although with many flaws and misgivings sometimes. For close four decades, Mugabe was on the top of the game in Zimbabwe and Africa at large. An iconic figure *per se*, Mugabe is one thing in many. All depends on how one defines Mugabe. This makes it hard to contain him within a book or chapter that seeks to dissect his political journey and his legacy altogether. Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe with unchecked absolute power so as to become synonymous with it (Winter 2017). However, just like any

mortal, Mugabe fell on his own sword. After falling from grace resulting from self-inflicted causes, history will have many volumes about the man who ruled Zimbabwe with an iron fist for over three decades. Further, history will like to learn how a man in his mid-90s could unwaveringly keep tabs on his enemies for such a long time. One would argue that Mugabe always batted down the hatchets by making sure that he was on top of the game. In so doing, he would shuffle his enemies like cards and get away with it. Refer to how Mugabe appointed Joice Mujuru his vice president whom he later fired based on fabricated allegations that she wanted to poison Mugabe or use some spells to kill Mugabe (Tendi 2016); and thereby snatch power (Kinyondo and Pelizzo 2016). To survive, Mugabe had to see to it that whoever indicated any ambition or qualification to succeed him had to either face “the wrath of the law” or be fired.

This chapter seeks to trace the personal and political life of the [former] politician-cum-statesman of Zimbabwe, with the hope to educate other statesmen on the [African] continent and beyond on how best should they conduct themselves as they lead the people.

Mugabe the politician and statesman

Robert Mugabe became actively in revolutionary politics in the 1960s. Since then, he assumed different leadership positions up until independence in 1980 when he was elected the Prime Minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Although he worked with various Vice Presidents at different times, who included Joshua Nkomo, Simon Muzenda, Joseph Musika, Joice Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa, this chapter focuses more on his relationship with the latter and events which unfolded out of the relationship.

In December 2014, Mugabe appointed Mnangagwa Vice President whom he also dumped soon before being overthrown in his attempt to create room for his wife to succeed him (Burke and Graham-Harrison 2017 cited in Linnell-Zyto 2018) which backfired to end up bringing him down. Due to being his long-time protégé, Mugabe wrongly thought Mnangagwa would be used to pave the way

for Mrs. Mugabe to complete her project. Mugabe employed the strategy of keeping one's enemy closer at the arm's length to know that he or she plans or think about him. Apart from shuffling his nemesis, Mugabe kept the war veterans very close to see to it that they did his show and dirty laundry. Nevertheless, being the part of oligarchy in Zimbabwe (Sadomba 2011), war veterans, too, used Mugabe to stay in the game in which new blood was becoming a palpable enemy for them. Like in any oligarchic or mafia organisation, there must be a Don who umpires the game which Mugabe was. If anything, Mugabe knew how to use acrimonious faction to sustain his power up until his wife spoiled everything. This resulted in the failure of Mugabe's divided-and-rule tactics he used to keep war veterans on check (Sadomba, 2008). For, once his wife burst into the scene, she disturbed the equilibrium for not respecting them or underscoring the role they played in maintaining her husband's autocratic and oligarchic rule. To keep war veterans checked, Mugabe's government created what is known as 'patriotic history' (Fontein, 2006) under which veterans were entitled some rights such as gratuity, respect and later land. Essentially, Mugabe's strategy was simple. Scratch my back, I will scratch yours. Had his wife not been the party of the G-40 or generation (Mavimira, 2016; Shandirwa 2016; and Mellon and Evans, 2017) or members of Grace inner circle who did not participate in the war of liberation (Southall, 2018), Mugabe would have easily manipulated the war veterans to show them that they needed him due to being vulnerable from the youths who did not fight the war of liberation. This would have been much easy provided that the G-40 did not cloak their overbearing ambitions to grab power. They were deviously hell-bent ready to use Mrs. Mugabe who also thought she was using them to achieve their goals before everything backfired to end up losing out to what came to be known as Lacoste clique led by Mnangagwa (Shandirwa, 2016) in cohort with some top military officials of Zimbabwe Armed Forces.

Due to the support Mugabe enjoyed from veterans and the results of shuffling his enemies, up until his fall, at the age of 93 years, he was planning to stand for yet another five-year term in office

which shows that he was aiming at clocking up 100 years. Again, was Mugabe—who wanted to cling to power or his courtiers and handlers—forced him to do so to avoid losing power and become vulnerable? Was really Mugabe in control of Zimbabwe or he was just being used by his inner circle led by his unwisely loudmouthed and Machiavellian wife, Grace, who proved to be a thorn in Mugabe’s side *vis-à-vis* power struggles within his government and party? This is because, for Grace, power was the matter of life and death wherein usurping was nothing but make or break project that ended up breaking making Mugabe look terribly bad however bad he already was.

Furthermore, which controlled another between the government and the ruling party in this zero-sum game? Were Mugabe and his wife one in one or two struggling strange bedfellows? Who was using another between Mugabe and his wife? What should Zimbabweans expect after Mugabe from his own party and his friends-turned enemies in charge? Will the new regime under Mnangagwa and Chiwenga change itself or wait to be changed? Will it escape Mugabe’s shadow as the main malefactors who created and used its leaders commit grave violations of human rights in Zimbabwe? For example, Mnangagwa and Chiwenga, *inter alia*, are blamed on having enforced Gukurahundi Shona word that means “drive out rubbish” (Meredith 2018) which saw genocide (Machingura 2010; Ndlovu and Dube 2013 ;Mpofu 2015; and Mpofu 2016) committed in Matebeleland between 1983 and 1987 (Mnangagwa, 2018). Will Zimbabweans forgive and forget and forge ahead or hit back demanding accountability based on the history of the country? Will the new regime adequately and justly address land issues in Zimbabwe? There are many more questions than answers. However, this chapter will restrain itself in two important aspects of Mugabe namely his strengths and shortfalls.

When one makes an analysis on Mugabe, it depends on what side of the person one addresses. Careless, imposing and, sometimes, cunning, one chapter cannot analyse and dissect Mugabe’s political journey sufficiently. What makes Mugabe hard to contain in a chapter of book is the fact that he goes down as the person who liberated and destroyed Zimbabwe altogether. However, this chapter seeks to

explore Mugabe's personal and political life that was shredded in mystery before being easily dislodged from power. No doubt about the fact that Mugabe liberated Zimbabwe. Mugabe's name featured high during and after the colonisation of Southern Rhodesia later Zimbabwe. Since then, Mugabe has been in the centre stage of almost all Zimbabwe issues nationally and internationally. It reached a time Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe as his personal estate in which his wife, friends and courtiers were laws in themselves. This corrupt gyrating around cronyism and nepotism oversaw Zimbabwe for over three decades intermittently up until 21st November, 2017 when Mugabe was forced to resign from office after the Zimbabwe Armed Forces staged a bloodless coup bringing to an end Mugabe's 37-year rule-cum-misrule.

Again, how did Mugabe become a strongman of Zimbabwe? After leading Zimbabwe to its independence in 1980 (Mashingaidze 2010), Mugabe became the founding father of the nation under the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) he took it from its founders namely Ndabaningi Sithole, Henry Hamadziripi, Mukudzei Midzi, Herbert Chitepo, Edgar Tekere, and Leopold Takawira who found it at the house of former Defence Minister Enos Nkala in Highfield in August 1963 (Mare, 2015). After taking the party from its founders, Mugabe saw to it that he transformed it to suit his political ambitions. Cunning and ruthless as he was, Mugabe purged all the founders of the vehicle that brought him to power. The sage has it that: Live by the sword, die by the sword (Schumacker 2006). Mugabe, too, was deposed and expelled the same way he did to the founders of his party. This is when persons such as Emerson Mnangagwa and others replaced the ZANU-PF's founders. As we will see later, Mugabe's manipulations ended up turning against him when Mnangagwa unceremoniously unseated his boss; and thereby assumed powers he still cling on up until now. Mugabe was not only overthrown but also expelled from his party. However, it took a long time for the fall of Mugabe (Moss and Patrick, 2006) due to the fact that Mugabe was able to manipulate the country for his long-time political survival not once or twice. If anything, Mugabe was the master spin doctor whose strategies paid

dividends before creating the seeds of destruction within themselves; and thereby bring him down easily and quickly. Nobody would have thought that a nonagenarian would be able to successfully cling to power for such a long time waiting for the army to intervene as it happened in Zimbabwe. Again, why did Mugabe want to die in power? Sarr (2016) provides an answer saying that Mugabe became a “prisoner of his own past” who feared “retributive justice, the real blood revenge” (p. 4) which is the fate many corrupt African dictators face so as to cling to power by all means possible. However, Mugabe is the luckiest dictator due to the fact that he was overthrown by his own stooges who fully supervised Mugabe’s bloodbath he ordered in Matebeleland under *gukurahundi* genocide already alluded on hereinabove. Therefore, chances of mistreating him are slim provided that they all share the same dark past that gyrates around gross abuse of human rights and mega corruption. They all would not like to put their dirty linens on the agora for Zimbabweans and the world at large to see; and therefrom hold them accountable. This is why it is plausible to say that Mnangagwa is likely to go after Mrs. Mugabe but not Mr. Mugabe in order to revenge for what she did in antagonising the two buddies. Why is it that Mnangagwa is likely to spare Mugabe? Magaisa (2017: 20) rightly answers as he notes that:

However, Mnangagwa and Mugabe were not always enemies. Mnangagwa, the younger man in the relationship, had served Mugabe loyally for a very long time, first as a special assistant during the war to liberate Zimbabwe, which Mugabe led in the 1970s and later as a minister and Vice President in independent Zimbabwe.

Arguably, if Mugabe’s ‘friendship’ with Mnangagwa still exists, Grace is likely to be spared for a while until Mugabe passes on. Shall Mugabe pass on anytime, Grace will face what Madame Mao Zedong faced after the death of her husband. Like Grace, Madame Mao and her gang of four was able to manipulate her husband to end up in a big quandary. This is because the G-40 was not only unwise and impatient in their approach but also consisted of political newbies who were competing with established politicians that had been in the

game for a long time. However, there is no difference between Madame Mao's gang of four namely Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan, Gao Guanhua and Wang Hongwen (Wong 2011) and Mrs. Mugabe's U-40 gang of four namely former party Commissar Saviour Kasukuwere, Finance Minister Ignatius Chombo, Jonathan Moyo and Patrick Zhuwao (Pigou 2011a). It is sad that when Mrs. Mugabe and her gang of four were contemplating usurping powers did not remind themselves of what transpired in China before. Maybe, Mrs. Mugabe thought that if things were not to work on her favour she would be as lucky as Philippines' Gucci, Imelda Marcos was. Will Mrs. Mugabe end in the same predicament as that of the former Ivorian first lady, Simone Gbagbo who fell along with her husband to end up being jailed for the role she played in her husband's criminality (Salihu 2016)? It is not easy to tell what will happen to Mrs. Mugabe due to the enormity of her criminality.

Mugabe the Liberator and a Revolutionary Who Betrayed His Cause

There is no way one can write the history of the struggle for the independence and the independence of Zimbabwe without mentioning Mugabe's name. If anything, Mugabe's contribution to the liberation of Zimbabwe cannot be gainsaid or ignored under whatever analysis or circumstance. One of Mugabe's milestones was the liberation of Zimbabwe. However, power became his stepping stone. Arguably, during and short time after gaining independence, Mugabe was a promising politician and leader that the West liked the most to do business with. Zimbabwe was then an ideal example of an African post-colonial country under the promising Mugabe for, apart from being highly educated, he was ebullient and smart when it came to articulating his policies and visions for Zimbabwe. His mastery convinced many Zimbabweans for many years so as to support him. Up until now, Mugabe still enjoys support from many Zimbabweans who view the current regime as the part and parcel of Mugabe's long time dictatorship. For such Zimbabweans, the current regime under Mugabe's former allies and men is nothing but his

typical replica. Due to his charisma and policies, Mugabe saw Zimbabwe become the 'darling of the West' (Chun, 2014). But as days went by, a true Mugabe slowly started to surface so as to turn everything upside down. Under the last years of Mugabe's rule, Zimbabwe had become a pariah state that faced all sorts of censure from its former allies and friends alike due to Mugabe's hostile policies. Because of this, the economy of Zimbabwe kept performing poorly. What used to be a regional economic hub became a regional disaster that saw many Zimbabweans exiled to many neighbouring countries mainly South Africa. Mugabe's economic failure affected almost every aspect of life. Hyperinflation denied many Zimbabweans access to essentials such as education, health and employment. The rates of malnutrition and food shortage or lack of it added more pains so as to exacerbate unrest in the country (Besada and Moyo 2008) so as to hugely weakening Mugabe's grip on power after his government lost popularity.

After gaining independence, as it was for any other African corrupt leaders, the West thought that it would use Mugabe to do its dirty laundry to no avail. Zimbabwe was very crucial at this time. Because the then South African apartheid rule was still in power. Therefore, as a neighbour, Zimbabwe was expected to behave well towards South Africa which at the time enjoyed support from the West. However, Mugabe's stance against apartheid South Africa was clear. He was against racism. Because of his staunch stance against the apartheid South Africa, the West felt that he was not a good person. For example, between 1986 to 1988 the United States (US) froze its aid to Zimbabwe because of criticising its so-called 'constructive engagement' towards apartheid South Africa (Mashingaidze, 2006). Less than a decade into its independence, Zimbabwe started to face diplomatic hurdles which would later affect it a great deal more, mainly after Mugabe decided to expropriate land from Zimbabwean white farmers without any recompense.

Although Mugabe did not become a stooge of the West per se, he was till liked for a few years he was in power before Zimbabweans started to question his persona and administration. As argued hereinabove, he did not address the land issue late away from the day

Zimbabwe became independent. He revisited the land issue after noting that it would buy more time in office which it did for a period of time. Like any African pariah state, after Zimbabwe became a pariah state before the West, it had to find an alternative to fill in the gap the West had created after shunning him. Therefore, Mugabe decided to court Chinese (Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008). This gave him a new lease of life for he was able to get the monies he wanted to run his government although at high cost to Zimbabwe whose resources such as mineral were rewarded to Chinese companies. In 2005 after flawed elections, China injected \$1.6 billion to the economy of Zimbabwe ranging from financing irrigation, roads, power plants, and telecommunications to electrical power generations in Zimbabwe (Chun, 2014). On top of this, Mugabe benefited hugely from his Chinese new friends. Personally, Mugabe received a gift from the government of China which decided to build Mugabe a \$9 million palace (Howard-Hassmann 2010). Mugabe who was shunned and barred from the West started to travel to China or Singapore for medical examinations and other personal needs such as shopping sprees for his extravagant wife, Grace or Gucci (Kusuka 2013 cited in Santos and Ndhlovu 2016) who recently admitted to have spent \$500,000 annually renting a house in Dubai for her son Robert Mugabe Jr. who was studying there. This does not include HK\$40 million the Mugabes spent in 2009 on buying an apartment for their daughter Bona who was then studying in Hong Kong (Machivenyika, 2018). Ironically, while the Mugabes were spending such a humongous amount of money junior doctors were paid just less than \$329 per month before allowances (*Reuters*, 2018). The money the Mugabes spent on the rent of their son is huge by all standards. Even people in rich countries in the West will tell you this is not joke money. For poor Zimbabweans—who were going to bed with empty stomachs—such money is a fortune. The story of the Mugabes does not end up here. It was reported that when Mugabe's daughter got married she received a cool \$100,000 and 55 heads of cattle from her father, \$35,000 from her mother, \$50,000 from her mother's partner in diamond deals Ihmad Ahmed whereas the total sum the couple got as presents from Mugabe dynasty and its partners

on that day was \$225,000 and 65 heads of cattle (Nyathi 2014). While Mrs. Mugabe was spending big bucks on her children, she did not forget herself. In 2009, for example, she said to have spent £55,000 (\$98,600) buying worth of marble statues in Vietnam and a £8,700 handbag in Singapore (Lai 2017). Nonetheless, nobody knows the actual amount of money Mrs. Mugabe stole or squandered in the entire her husband was in power.

Mrs. Mugabe did not only rob public coffers but she also plundered other resources. According to Afrika (2018) Mrs. Mugabe, using her Chinese associates, was implicated in ivory smuggling ring. Further, Afrika notes that Mrs. Mugabe was facing a forensic audit by the ruling ZANU–PF’s women’s league over “hundreds of millions” of party funds not to mention involvement in setting up parallel money markets as well as illegal export of precious minerals. Other Mrs. Mugabe’s foreign accomplices are the Dubai-based businessmen Imad Ahmad and his nephew Ramzi Mali who specifically used to deal in diamonds stolen from and smuggled out of Zimbabwe under the directions of Mrs. Mugabe (Martin and Taylor 2012). The *Daily News* (2018) in its interview with Mrs. Mugabe former right hand woman Environment, Water and Climate minister Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri reports that former First Lady Grace Mugabe occasionally raided the country’s ivory stockpile kept at the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) and on the basis that they were her donations to unnamed fellow first ladies in the Far East. The big blow for Mrs. Mugabe came after an Australian wildlife photographer, Andrew Steirn, confronted the authorities in Zimbabwe with evidence implicating her. Steirn cited in News (2018) notes that “ivory was being sourced either from the national park’s vault, being thieved or pilfered, or from live elephants being killed by poaching syndicates. The syndicate would then sell to Grace Mugabe’s clientele.” Neither Mrs. Mugabe nor her lawyers recanted this expose which the authorities in Zimbabwe admitted to have been investigating.

Arguably, Mrs. Mugabe’s corruption and greed shows how African presidents are manipulated by their spouses so as to sabotage them hugely while they receive salaries and live on taxpayers’ money.

This means; African presidency needs to be decolonised and sanitised (Mhango *forthcoming*) to see to it that nobody uses as a family business as it is Mugabe's legacy among others.

Additionally, Mugabe was able to survive because Chinese aid and investments do not require a recipient country to apply and protect human rights or democracy as it has always been the case with the West. Therefore, for Mugabe, China was a good friend to do business with. This is why dirty deals in mineral, ivory and other resources were fair game for Mugabe's wife and friends to plunder and sell to China.

Mugabe the Cliff-hanger-Cum-Dictator

When Mugabe became the Prime Minister and later the President of Zimbabwe, many thought he would be a democratic and progressive leader who would promote and protect human rights by allowing others to rule Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe had multiparty politics since independence (Cameron and Dorman, 2009; Boone and Kriger, 2010). However, this democracy under which multiparty elections were conducted was flawed due to the fact that there was no healthy and ideal environment for fair competition among the contenders for the power. Mugabe, just like any other African dictators, used elections as the rubberstamps for clinging to power illegally. Participating in such elections was nothing but like sheep going to the slaughterhouse (Moore, 2014). Although there was opposition, it was not robust as it was supposed to be or expected to be. Opposition in Zimbabwe was a tool for legitimising Mugabe illegitimate rule after he lost Zimbabwe's faith. Essentially, Mugabe replicated what his predecessor, Ian Smith used to do by sidelining indigenous Zimbabweans from participating in democratic process in their own country (Mamdani, 2009). The ruling ZANU-PF was everything namely a political party and the government. Dorman (2006) notes that Zimbabwe both before and after independence struggled with single-party rule without fully implementing or instituting it. Such a double-faced democracy did not differentiate Zimbabwe from one-party state. For, theoretically, Zimbabwe was a

multiparty democracy with practically all characteristics of a single-party state. However, the situation changed dramatically in 1997 after the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) which resulted in the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change MDC) (McCorley 2013, 2015) that ever since put Mugabe on the tenterhooks. Due to espousing multiparty democracy, Mugabe was able to attract and calm down the ever-demanding West *vis-a-vis* democracy. Thus, the West wrongly thought would use Mugabe the same way it did with other dictators and stooges such as Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi (Kenya) Joseph Mobutu (Zaire later the DRC), Felix Houphouet-Boigny (Ivory Coast) and many more. Likewise, Mugabe thought he would use the West to run his show revolving around paternalistic politics. However, things did not happen as the both sides expected. Soon after staying in power for a long time, Mugabe rebelled against the West. The promise of democratic Zimbabwe slowly started to evaporate; and autocracy cropped in on its place. For Mugabe, it was tit for tat. For, how could he fulfil the promise of democratising Zimbabwe while the West failed in its promises of providing funds to buy back the land in order to redistribute it to many landless Zimbabweans? The West did not only default on its promise but it also failed to meet its agreed obligation. The United Kingdom that promised to provide £44 million in 1980 (Besada and Moyo 2008) for buying back the land based on willing buyer-willing-seller formula towards redistribution of land in Zimbabwe (Mamdani, 2009). But it late suspended the project after sensing that government official had received money they would spend on buying 15 percent of intended land. Interestingly, Howard-Hassmann (2010) notes that 80% of white-owned land was taken by the government that has since never redistributed. Essentially, this suspension gave Mugabe the ammunitions he was longing for. Shrewd as Mugabe had always been, he seized the opportunity and utilised it to recapture the faith and leverage his government had already lost due to the misrule of Zimbabwe. He therefore, decided to expropriate land from white farmers who are less than one percent of Zimbabwe's population owned 80% of arable land in Zimbabwe (Hove and Gwiza, 2012)

which means the rest of Zimbabweans and their government only owned 20% of arable land. Essentially, such land unequal distribution and ownership created two different types of citizens namely the rich white and poor Africans whom whites used as their cheap labourers.

Since colonial times, land issues have always been thorny in Zimbabwe (Gasana, Bell, Kajume, Mupindu and Smith-Jon, 2011 cited in Chikoto and Sadiq 2012) whose gravitas has always engulfed the country for many years before and after. Like it is the case in Kenya, Namibia and South Africa that face the same problem, Zimbabwe was a settler colonial. Therefore, its land demand and setting are different from non-settler ex-colonies. In any settler colony, land has always been an issue because the white settlers grabbed land from the indigenous; and used it to dominate the indigenous people. After Zimbabwe became independent, there was a Lancaster agreement that the United Kingdom would provide money for buying back the land and redistributing it to many landless indigenous Zimbabweans (Sebola and Tsheola, 2014). The British did not live up to their promise. They silently shifted the burden to Mugabe and his government. The failure to provide the funds for land redistribution angered Zimbabweans who waited to get land as it was promised before independence. Like the British, Mugabe, too, seemed not to talk about the land issues in his first years in office. The failure to secure land for redistribution made Mugabe look bad before many landless and poor Zimbabweans. He therefore blamed everything on Britain for failing to live up to its promises. To do away with land crisis, in 1996, Mugabe had to get land and redistribute to some Zimbabwe. Mugabe warned that he was going without recompense simply because the whites who took land from Zimbabweans did not pay anything for it (Mlambo, 2010). Mugabe's argument appealed to many landless Zimbabweans. They saw him as a hero who would deliver them from landlessness and poverty. However, in the end, Mugabe became an anti-climax fallen hero whose fall resulted from corrupting the institutions (Alao, 2012; Sibanda, 2016), which his enemies used to bring him down easily. Although Mugabe intended to use land expropriation as a tool for his political survival, many Zimbabweans and other Africans wrongly

thought that Mugabe was becoming a political born again who has seen the light. They thought Mugabe's move to expropriate land was one of the promises of the liberation of Africans. So, Mugabe enjoyed accolades not only from Zimbabweans but also some African countries. However, the land Mugabe expropriated ended in the hands of his cronies, friends and political backers mainly the elites (Scoones, Marongwe, Mavedzenge, Murimbarimba, Mahenehene and Sukume, 2011) while the majority of landless Zimbabwe went on being landless. So, too, Mugabe's land expropriation was racist and selfish. For, in 2014, Mugabe cited in Gaffey (2017a) notes "we say no to whites owning our land, and they should go...they can own companies and apartments...but not the soil." If at all white Zimbabweans are the legitimate citizens of Zimbabwe, why did Mugabe intentionally target them based on their pedigree? However you look at and into it, Mugabe's land expropriation was racist. Nevertheless, this does not mitigate the fact that, as well, the land in Zimbabwe was grabbed by whites based on racist and colonial *modus operandi*. Again, was the past supposed to justify the land expropriation for the country that is independence and those deemed colonisers are citizens? This is because, if the matter was to provide land to landless Zimbabweans, I think landless white Zimbabweans too deserved land just like any other citizens. And I think Mugabe's carelessness and demagoguery are the reasons why many Western countries punished him for racism he has been accused of ever since. Therefore, this can be one of Mugabe's legacies. To adequately address landlessness or land hunger in Zimbabwe, the authority needs to provide it to landless Zimbabweans regardless they are black or white. As well, the authorities need to expropriate land from black Zimbabweans who got it illegally or corruptly.

This being the case, Mugabe's land policies did not solve the problem. Instead, it shifted it to the future to end up haunting him.

The Fall of Mugabe from Grace Caused by Grace and Greed

Mugabe goes down as one of Africa's long time rulers. Being in power for over three decades is not a small feat. Its negative and

positive impacts are huge and wide. History testifies that long-time rulers apart from becoming dictators become unpopular so as to create more enemies within and without their countries. This was exactly the same that happened with Mugabe's long-time rule. After his long-time rule became obsolete and unpopular, Mugabe made sure that he recaptured the hearts and minds of Zimbabweans mainly the poor. He knew that their big problem was the landlessness settler colonialism caused in Zimbabwe. Therefore, for Mugabe, this was but a golden and last opportunity for his survival. He therefore, had to act quickly and steadfastly. To do so, he had to do something that would appeal to them. He therefore seized the opportunity and expropriated the land from Zimbabwean white farmers in 2000 (Moyo, 2011). Mugabe's move to seize the white farms resulted into a catastrophe that saw Zimbabwe's economy suffer greatly up until the army deposed Mugabe and installed current president Mnangagwa who is struggling with the sick economy. The fall of Mugabe was not expected especially at the time he was preparing himself to run for presidency in 2018. Mugabe's fall shocked many friends and enemies particularly because his party and consiglieres Mnangagwa and one of his vice president, former army chief, Constantino Chiwenga turned the tables on him. Mugabe and his other members of his inner sanctum did not expect the two to be instrumental in bringing him down provided that Chiwenga once threatened to overthrow the government had the opposition assumed power; and thereby reinstate Mugabe. This was when the opposition party the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) claimed that its leader and presidential candidate, the late Morgan Tsvangirai had won the 2008 presidential elections (Timberg, 2008). Again, then was then. Soon after Mugabe allowed his wife Grace to harbour and show presidential ambitions, Mnangagwa found himself on the receiving end. After appointing him as one of the two vice presidents after firing former president Mujuru, Mugabe wanted Mnangagwa to keep on doing his dirty laundry to no avail. for, Mnangagwa openly showed his presidential ambitions so as to become an obstacle for Grace. To counter and stop Mnangagwa's threat, Grace—who practically was the conflation of her husband—decided to openly take

on him. Mnangagwa's vice president was hanging in balance up until Mugabe fired him the saw way he did to Mujuru after indicating that she was ready to replace him (Munezi 2015) thanks to having all credentials as a heroine from the war of liberation (Hem, 2017) which Mrs. Mugabe and her cohorts understandably lacked. To calm down the succession storm, Mugabe was persuaded to appoint Mnangagwa who fought the war of liberation but did not have as many credentials as Mujuru had. I think this because Mnangagwa served Mugabe diligently before. One thing those who convinced Mugabe to appoint Mnangagwa one of his vice president is the fact that Mnangagwa is known for his crocodile-like cunningness, ruthlessness and viciousness which gave him the moniker of the Crocodile (Southall 2018) or Ngwenwa in Shona (Shandirwa, 2016). Mnangagwa proved his *crocness* by being able to topple his boss soon after he fired him. Like, a crocodile, Mnangagwa took long time to come to snatch a morsel from his master thereby taking power after skilfully weathering Mrs. Mugabe's political storm. There was no way the Mugabes would have their cake and eat it. Again, while this time around Mnangagwa apply his crookedness to fill in the gap Mugabe left behind? Essentially, whoever came close to Mugabe and indicated to be ambitious or competent to become president after the aging and ailing Mugabe became Grace's fair game. This is why Mnangagwa's vice presidency was as stormy as Mujuru's was. This is because; Grace eyed her husband's office had anything detrimental happened to him. Actually, the arrival of Grace in Zimbabwe's political scene made political life difficult for Mugabe and his consigliere. Thanks to what Mhango (2015, 2016) refers to as bedroom politics, Grace became a force to reckon *vis-à-vis* Zimbabwe's political future that culminated in the ouster of Mugabe.

However, many things contributed to the peaceful ouster of Mugabe among which is the fact that Mugabe had run out cards. Likewise, old age and the shambolic nature of the economy had a lot to do with Mugabe's fall from grace. Similarly, as it is the case in Burkina Faso where former strongman Blaise Compaore was overthrown, Mugabe, a cliff-hanger who survived much turbulence, had nothing to offer to mollify the Zimbabweans to stop the *coup*

d'état. Again, when it comes to his legacy, Mugabe is one of a few overthrown rulers who were left to live as a free statesman in his country. I think this is because those who toppled him had their baggage that Mugabe and his sympathiser know too well. Mugabe's predicament is clear that he might live a freeman up until he died. This is different from his counterpart Jacob Zuma in South Africa who was charged a few months after he was forcefully evicted from office. Like another counterpart in the neighbouring Malawi, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Mugabe still has a role to play in Zimbabwe's politics for the entire time he will be alive.

Essentially, the fall of Mugabe, despite rooting him out of office, has shaped his legacy as the president who resigned without putting up a tangible fight. Whether Mugabe deserves this credit or not, depends on how one looks into the whole situation revolving around power struggles within the ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe at large. The major questions one can ask are: Will the absence of Mugabe from office bring a closure for Zimbabwe's suffering? Will his successor adequately and justly address land issues by recompensing white farmers? If so, where will the money come from? Will white farmers reconcile themselves with the government in Zimbabwe and take whatever it will offer as their redress? It is too early to speculate about what will happen to the post-Mugabe Zimbabwe provided that his party is still in power.

As noted, in the beginning, Mugabe was a promising leader for his country before falling out with the West. However, he knew that land was a trump card for his survival. To make sure that this card works to his favour, Boone and Kriger (2010) cite *Reuters* (2000) which quotes Mugabe as saying that Zimbabwe as a country is for Zimbabweans and its land belongs to indigenous Zimbabweans. He goes further to note that Zimbabwe's economy was owned and controlled by "a tiny racial minority ... of colonial origins' and 'foreign'" (p. 182). By putting a colonial and racial face on land issue, Mugabe got away with the murder. For, his land crusade against white colonialists, for period of time, appealed to many Zimbabwe especially the war veterans whose dreams and promise were to own a piece of land. Therefore, Mugabe first support came from the war

veterans who still have an important role to play in Zimbabwe's politics. For, it is the same veterans who helped the army to peacefully ouster Mugabe when his land policies proved to be a disaster to the country. War veterans, just like any other Zimbabweans, developed hatred against Mugabe's rule. This is because; the West applied sanctions on Zimbabwe soon after Mugabe expropriated white farms. Therefore, since 2000 up until 2017, Zimbabwe suffered a lot from economic knock on effects the sanctions caused. In other words, the West succeeded to defeat and punish Mugabe altogether. There was no way Mugabe would have survived indefinitely due to the fact that Zimbabwe, after gaining independence, Zimbabwe was a bread basket of the region that ended up becoming a basket case (Mhango 2016). Had Mugabe decided to retire early, just like Nelson Mandela in the neighbouring South Africa, his legacy would be exemplary and ideal. Arguably, Mugabe's overstay in power doomed Zimbabwe either accidentally or intentionally. Apart from turning Zimbabwe into a basket case, Mugabe is a freedom fighter who ended up becoming a tyrant (Holland, 2012) whose role in destroying Zimbabwe is bigger than contribution. This is because during the struggle for independence, Mugabe was supported by the majority as opposed to the minority with who he mismanaged Zimbabwe. Importantly, to tell who Mugabe actually is, all depends on the chapter one reads and analyse about the man; and the time of the behaviour of the subject that kept changing from time to time according to the circumstances. Like taking a dip in the heart of the dark ocean, analysing Mugabe's services and disservices to Zimbabwe, Africa and the world is not an easy task.

Mugabe's Controversial End and legacy

Hate or like him, Mugabe's name will always be mentioned wherever one studies the history of the struggle for independence of Zimbabwe, be it in a good or bad light. Like any finding father, there is no way one can study the history of Zimbabwe without Mugabe whose contribution in the making and breaking of Zimbabwe is very

huge. For example, whenever land issues to the land-hungry population rise, Mugabe's name will feature high as the person who sat on the land and wanted to use it for his political survival. Apart from land issues, Mugabe goes down as the person who suppressed democracy in Zimbabwe. For, his rule was characterised by clientelism, corruption cronyism and nepotism among many evils associated with Mugabe's rule which are the hallmarks of many rules in Africa (Rothstein 2011). Mugabe's time in power also was long; and its impacts, especially negative ones, are long lasting. Despite this, Mugabe has the legacy of being one of the longest and oldest African rulers (McCorley 2014) competing with other notorious dictators who misruled their countries for many decades.

Another Mugabe's hallmark is nothing but economic ruin he left country in (Norman 2015) resulting from his misguided policies, mainly after he started to expropriate land led to an economic cataclysm for Zimbabwe. As well, it will take a long time for the post-Mugabe Zimbabwe to recover from the Catch-22 Mugabe's rule created. Globally, Mugabe will always be mentioned when one studies world diplomacy as the person who fitted almost in every role he decided to play. Mugabe will always be credited for his bravery; shrewdness and later failure that culminated in his rise and fall altogether. Up until his fall, Mugabe was the only left African ruler who was able to openly stand up to the West (Huni, 2017) without any fear. Mugabe's last stand up to the West was at his last United Nations (UN) summit at which he took a swipe at US president Donald Trump whom he equated with the biblical goliath when Trump threatened to bring to its extinction (Kentish, 2017).

Mugabe's other legacy revolves around his family. Like Denis Sassou-Nguesso (Congo), Faure Eyadema (Togo), Theodoro Obiang Nguema (Equatorial Guinea) and Yoweri Museveni (Uganda), *inter alia*, Mugabe's rule was a family business which was chiefly managed by his wife Grace. Thanks to his old age, Mugabe was unable to control his wife and her friends and courtiers. Therefore, his wife and her schemers seized the power in unofficial *coup de grace* that lead to the other bloodless *coup d'état* that saw Mugabe falling from power. Under G-40, Grace did not only control Mugabe's power but also

wanted to take it for good. Such a move did not only create acrimonious factions within the government and the ruling party but also exacerbated power struggle revolving around the politics of succession that targeted Mugabe's power. In tightening the screws, Grace Mugabe cited in Gaffey (2017b) notes that "I say to Mr. Mugabe you should...leave me to take over your post." And indeed, had Mugabe not been toppled, chances for Grace to succeed her husband were high. She had already penetrated the ruling party by securing the position of its women's wing by being appointed the first secretary of the Women's League (Munezi, 2015). There were calls for Mugabe to appoint his wife one of his two vice presidents in which she would serve along former Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko or former Defence Minister Sydney Sekeremayi (Pigou, 2017b) who would in turn be sidelined had anything undesirable happen to Mugabe's life. This is because the constitution of Zimbabwe is clear that on the event wherein the president is unable to run the government, his vice president must be sworn in as president to finish his electoral term. Despite the calls for Mugabe to appoint his wife his vice president were many, Mugabe seemed to be cagey. Who knows that after being appointed vice president, Mrs. Mugabe would not have hastened the death of her husband so as to get into power? There also were some rumours that Mugabe's health was deteriorating. Also, Mugabe was hesitant to appoint his wife due to the fact that he knew first-hand how incapable and unpopular she was. Therefore, his wife and her courtiers did not like seeing power slinking from their hands to others among who was the current president Mnangagwa who was fired soon before the *coup*. Power struggle became even palpable due to the fact all incompatible cliques were within the same party.

Another legacy Mugabe leaves behind is nothing but being a survivalist who survived many endangerments to end up falling on his sword. Refer to how his party pulled him down after his wife Grace presented it with the opportunity to do so. Although Grace brought the disgrace to her husband, no doubt, Mugabe's party the ZANU-PF shares the big blame for internalising family politics revolving around cronyism. Some blame everything on Mugabe for

clinging to power. Others blame everything on Mugabe's inner sanctum which in cohort with his wife took advantage of his old age. All in all, Mugabe cannot escape the blame who, like biblical Samson whose fall is attributed to Delilah (Dang 2008), allowed his wife to sip a lot from the cup of power so as to be intoxicated and dream about taking over the office from her ailing husband. Grace's ambitions cost her husband dearly. This is because when the army decided to step in, it used her as a pretext. Likewise, Grace's actions and bullish behaviour created many enemies for her husband within and without the government and the ruling party. She expelled many of her husband's compatriots and friends in her quest for power due to the fact that she did not know where the base of her husband's power was. Who knew Mugabe would be deposed by his comrades and consigiore with who he liberated Zimbabwe to wind his rein by destroying it? Who would know that Mugabe, the once darling of the West, would become its own sworn enemy after expropriating land from white farmers (Matondi 2012)? What is clear is that Mugabe used land expropriation as the tool and means by which to remain in power. It worked perfectly in the beginning, particularly after rewarding some of his inner sanctum and the freedom fighters. However, things got out of control when Mugabe allowed his wife to use her bedroom to scheme to get in power illegally and brutally after causing her husband to fall out with his long-time compatriots and aides such as Mnangagwa.

Who is Robert Gabriel Mugabe? Mugabe was born on 21st February, 1924 to a Malawian father Gabriel Masuzyo Matibili, and a Shona mother, Bona Shoniwa (Mhango 2016) in the then Rhodesia later Zimbabwe. Like any other children at the time, Mugabe went to school at Kutama Mission School. This is why the name of father Jerome O'Hea is synonymous with Mugabe's academic journey to the fact that he is the one who secured him a scholarship that changed his life (Arnold and Wiener 2007; and Godwin, 2011) for good. Mugabe was secretive and he did not play with the children of his age (Meredith 2009). So, too, he was a disciplinarian who stuck to his goals thanks to being brought by the Jesuit Missionaries who inculcated it in him. This is because his father had abandoned

Mugabe and his siblings (Romano, 2008) which might have greatly contributed to his ruthlessness. Maybe, this is one of the forces behind Mugabe's desire to succeed in life. His father abandonment must have contributed greatly to Mugabe's patience and brutality altogether. The history of Africa has it; some brutal rulers such as Idi Amin (Uganda) Joseph Mobutu (Zaire) and Jean-Bedel Bokassa who was an orphan became who they were simply because of their history of being orphans or being abandoned by their fathers.

Differently from his colleagues, Mugabe is said to have been an avid reader who would spend much of time reading (Freeth, 2011). Maybe, this is why Mugabe was able to obtain seven university degrees. There are some uncorroborated stories that Mugabe used to hunt birds; and got many more birds than his colleagues who spent much time playing while Mugabe would hide near by the traps as he read his book up until the traps caught some birds. Once, again, this brings another of Mugabe's legacy that he was a highly educated who was duped by an ignorant wife who skilfully used bedroom politics to get closers to grabbing power.

Conclusion

As argued in the beginning, there is no way one book or chapter can adequately contain Mugabe's history. Therefore, suffice it to say, Mugabe's legacy will always be controversial for many years to come. Academics will need to do a lot of work to see to it that Mugabe's history is documented so as to act as a lesson for the coming generations to be aware on how good persons can change and become evil persons (Zimbaldo, 2004). This is very important due to the fact that it can help the affected people or countries to start predict earlier when their leaders drift from being good to evil. The earlier this is done the better. Had such an assumption existed in Zimbabwe, Mugabe would not have stayed in power after expropriating land for his political survival. Those who supported him would not have. This rationale can be used on Mnangagwa currently to predict the type of president is going to be, especially if Zimbabweans draw from his tainted past. Again, can an evil person

become a good person and reverse Zimbardo's findings? The history of Africa and partly the world does not have a bad person who turned to be good except for mysterious Robbin Hood who is said to have robbed the rich and offered the spoils to the poor (Seal 2009) which is impossible in today's world of politics. All those who were good like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania were good from the beginning to the end.

Importantly, there are some lessons Mugabe's legacy teaches. The first lesson is that every power will one day come to an end either naturally or violently. Secondly, it does not guarantee any security for power grabbers however how long they will cling to it. As noted above, Mugabe is the luckiest dictator who was overthrown by his own protégés and stooges. Due to sharing many dark experiences, they seem to drag feet when it comes to persecuting him. Are they afraid of spilling beans provided that the heads of the current government share much criminal past with Mugabe? Will they prosecute in the near future or give in and accept to coexist as the way of saving their faces? For major players in the current government such as Gukurahundi I and II in which major players such as Mnangagwa, his vice president, retired commander, Constantine Chiwenga, Air Marshall Perence Shiri and former Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri are implicated (Kagwanja and Kondlo, 2008) which makes them vulnerable shall Mugabe or his other consiglieri decide to spill beans? Is Mnangagwa afraid of setting another precedent that will turn tables on in future due to the fact that he and Chiwenga started a long time ago to plot to take power from Mugabe whenever their interests were threatened (Campbell, 2008)? Who knows that the two will fallout the same they did with their former boss whom they overthrew? Essentially, Mugabe's legacy is nothing but a tragicomedy whose climax is still unfolding provided that his wife and other consiglieri are still under investigations for their role in usurping and misusing the office of the president.

Another Mugabe's legacy revolves around the repetition of history. As argued hereinabove that Mugabe snatched his party from its founders, he, too, was expelled (Marumba, 2017) from the party

he used to rule for over three decades. This fulfils the sage that he who lives by sword will die by sword. By allowing his wife and his consigliere to rob and sabotage the country, Mugabe gives us another lesson that power is not supposed to be a family business. He or she who was sworn-in in a certain capacity must enjoy and use the power but not his or her family as it currently in many corrupt African countries wherein the power of the president is the family business many use to make quick bucks within a short time. Therefore, African constitutions need to address this anomaly by making sure that they stipulate the scope in which presidency must be used by one person but not his or her family. So, too, African constitutions must stop the latitude that for many years has allowed African rulers to be above the law including their constitutions.

Mugabe will be remembered as a highly educated person who was misled by illiterate wife. Refer to how he consented to the lull of his wife so as to be the part and parcel of the scheme that saw his wife being awarded a contentious PhD without any merit or proviso (Rusvingo, 2015; and Santos and Ndhlovu, 2016). Such an act portrays Mugabe as a highly educated person who did not respect the ethos of academics. If such a thing were sanctioned by illiterates such as former South African president Jacob Zuma, Gambian Yahya Jammeh, Zambian Fredrick Chiluba or current Sudanese president Omar Bashir would not have attracted scrutiny. To make matters worse, the same greed and illiterate wife became an instrumental tool in Mugabe's fall. As noted above, Mugabe will be remembered as the president who privatised public institutions and gave way to a family rule that saw Zimbabwe being plundered for many years.

No way can one conclude Mugabe's legacy without touching on hyperinflation Africa has ever seen. After expropriating land and being shunned, Mugabe threw Zimbabwe in an economic shambles that saw its once mightier dollar plummet to next to nothing if not nothing. In this regard, Zimbabwe faced the hyperinflation of the 21st century (Hanke and Kwok, 2009) wherein its bills were worthless compared even to the toilet paper. For example, the United Nations (UN) cited in Coomer and Traun Thaler (2011) notes that in January 2009 quoted Zimbabwe dollar has ceased to function to the extent

that exchange rate of some 350 nonillion Zimbabwe dollars to one US dollar based on the old Zimbabwe dollar. This hyperinflation brought a lot of suffering to the majority of Zimbabweans. While the majority was suffering miserably, the high and the mighty surrounding Mugabe were eating life with a big spoon. Refer to how Mugabe spent so madly that she was nicknamed Gucci Grace (as indicated hereinabove) wherever she went for shopping sprees with her children and friends. This shows how careless, myopic, ruthless and selfish Mugabe and his dynasty were. Indeed, absolute power corrupts absolutely. Like hyenas feasting on a skinny carcass, Mugabe and his courtiers did not envisage life without a carcass they were devouring without thinking about tomorrow. Nobody would risk thinking that a hyper academic like Mugabe would mess this way to end up with a tainted legacy. Thanks to power corruption and sightlessness, Mugabe and his people forgot that power belongs and comes from the people they were abusing. This is why the same people did not help them when they were overthrown. Instead, the people supported the army despite knowing that it is the one that maintained Mugabe corruption and dictatorship. Last but not least, Mugabe can be equated to a hen that ate its eggs simply because it has unchecked power to do so. A hen is a beast. A human should not behave like a beast. To avoid this, African countries need to amend their constitutions to see to it that the power to run the business of the country must be returned to the hoi polloi instead of leaving it in the hands of hoity toity as it is the case in Zimbabwe under Mugabe as a typical replica of other African countries whose rulers are above the law which they use to sabotage and ruin such countries. You will wonder to hear that Mugabe has immunity against prosecution simply because the constitution of Zimbabwe stipulates this despite all such gross violations of human rights and mega corruption that Mugabe and his courtiers and dynasty committed against millions of innocent Zimbabweans for over three decades of criminality and impunity.

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The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and Tourism Development in Zimbabwe during Mugabe's Reign

Tendai Chibaya & Phanos Matura

Introduction

This chapter discusses the impacts of Zimbabwe's Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) from 2000, whose chief proponent and ideologue was former President, Robert Mugabe, on the development of tourism in the country. On coming to power in 1980, Robert Mugabe and his government had promised to resolve land ownership imbalances (House of commons, 1981) which were generated by racialised policies of the colonial state. Among other land reforms in post-colonial Zimbabwe, the FTLRP was formally introduced in July 2000 as a "quick-fix" and community-driven strategy to simultaneously resolve once and for all, the historical land imbalances in Zimbabwe by the government. Though the FTLRP was formally introduced in July 2000, it came immediately after the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party's proposed Constitution suffered severe rejection during the Constitutional Referendum of February 2000. The land reforms should also be viewed in the context of ZANU-PF's waning legitimacy largely as a result of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party in 1999.

In an attempt to win the lost political ground, the ruling party led by Mugabe hi-jacked the FTLRP as a way of empowering the poor and middle income landless indigenous communities by availing to them more agricultural land. This is premised on the notion that land is the major form of wealth and a source of political and economic power (Zarin & Bujang, 1994). This was buttressed by ZANU-PF's campaigning slogan for the elections which read: 'The economy is

land and land is the economy' (Wolmer *et al.*, 2004: 92). However, the FTLRP strategy largely failed to deliver the government's intended outcomes. It resulted, among other things, in unprecedented violence, wanton destruction of the agricultural and wildlife estates some of which housed the most popular tourist attractions, closure of accommodation units and reduced security of tenure on land especially by the large-scale settler commercial farmers.

Above all, the country's tourism sector was negatively affected. Because tourism is capricious, the changes in Zimbabwe's political environment negatively affected its success. As one of the central economic pillars of the economy, tourism has contributed to 8% to the total Gross Domestic Product in 1999 which was followed by a 1% decline in 2000 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2000). Between 1980 and 1999, when there was a gradual land reform policy regime, Zimbabwe's tourist arrivals grew at an average growth rate of 17.5% and tourism receipts increased at an average annual growth rate of 18% in US\$ terms (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) Report, 2002).

On the whole, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme contributed to a significant decline in international tourist arrivals in Zimbabwe as the country was regarded as an unsafe destination across the globe. The country experienced an 11% drop in tourist arrivals and a 38% decline in revenue received during the period 1999-2000 (*Ibid*). The year 2002 recorded an 8% decline of tourist arrivals while revenue receipted an 8% drop as compared to 2001 (*Ibid*). In 2004, a decline of 18% on tourist arrivals was recorded (ZTA Report, 2004), 16% decrease in tourist arrivals in 2005 accompanied with 49% drop in revenue in the same period (ZTA Report, 2005). The year 2008 recorded a 22% decline in tourist arrivals (ZTA Report, 2008).

The chief causes of the decline in tourism included violence and political instability that emanated from the FTLRP which fuelled negative international publicity about Zimbabwe, shortages of basic commodities, harsh macro-economic environment, shortages of foreign currency and erratic fuel supplies (ZTA Report, 2002), cholera outbreak and global financial crisis (ZTA Report, 2008). The

downturn in the tourism and hospitality sector negatively impacted on the economy of the whole country as revenue inflows plummeted while many workers within the sector lost their jobs (Kachembere, 2014; Kuwaza, 2016; Makoshori, 2015). It is in light of these observations that this chapter seeks to examine the link between land reform policies and the development of the tourism industry. As the case of Zimbabwe's Fast-Track Land Reform Programme demonstrates, poor planning and miscalculations in the implementation of land reform policies may negatively affect development.

The chapter is organised into three main sections. The first section starts with a flash back of land reform programmes in Zimbabwe before and after independence to the year 2000. The second part discusses the wildlife estate and tourism before the FTLRP. Thirdly, the discussion examines the impacts of the FTLRP on Zimbabwe's tourism sector and winds up by looking at the future prospects of tourism in the country.

The land reform in Zimbabwe before independence

The land question has been a historical source of conflict and attrition in Zimbabwe during both the colonial and post-colonial times. The land question has been a burning and fundamental question for over a century in Zimbabwe. The European settlers who colonised the people of Zimbabwe displaced the black majority, relegating them to infertile reserves not suitable for farming purposes (Hill & Katerere, 2002; Mafa, *et al.*, 2015; Ndela & Robison, 2007; Paradzayi, 2007; Wolmer *et al.*, 2004). This forced displacement ignited a sustained conflict which culminated into *Chimurenga* (war of liberation) as long back as 1896 (Mafa, *et al.*, 2015). The First *Chimurenga* of 1896-1897 was not successful in restoring land to the majority sons and daughters of the soil. It was unfinished business, and in the 1960s, the Second *Chimurenga* began as the majority sought restoration of their livelihood source, that is the land (Paradzayi, 2007). The Second *Chimurenga* culminated in the successful attainment of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 (*Ibid*). The struggle

for independence was largely motivated by the contentious land question. The new government of Zimbabwe, largely constituted by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party members under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, embarked on socialism and adopted a policy of land redistribution and resettlement (Masiwa, 2004). Under the banner of socialism the land reforms proceeded slowly and the peasant land invasions were criticised (Meisenhelder, 1994).

The First Phase of the Land Reform Programme: 1980 to 1999

The new government of independent Zimbabwe introduced the first phase of the resettlement programme in September 1980 (Masiwa, 2004). The major objectives for undertaking the resettlement programme were empowerment of the African majority, promotion of rural development and other socio-economic services to improve standards of living negatively affected by the war of liberation (*Ibid*). The land reform programme was considered a veritable tool to achieve sustainable peace and stability from a political perspective. It was also seen as an effective tool to achieve equity in land distribution and ownership with the long term view of eradicating poverty among the majority daughters and sons of soil (Matondi, 2011; Moyo, 2004). Economically, the first phase of land reform intended to improve agricultural productivity among the resettled families (Deninger *et al.*, 2014). As the initial step towards land redistribution, Mugabe's government used the willing-seller willing-buyer policy from 1980 to around 1997 (Malinga, 2018). As part of the land reform, the ZANU-PF government adopted the willing-buyer willing-seller approach agreed at the Lancaster House Conference of 1979 that had negotiated Zimbabwe's independence. Under the willing-buyer willing-seller policy, European farmers with vast pieces of land would approach and engage the government, which would in turn buy the land for redistribution purposes (Malinga, 2018; Masiwa, 2004; Matondi, 2011; Moyo, 2004).

According to Masiwa (2004: 2), the targeted beneficiaries of the first phase were, 'effectively, the landless people, returning

Zimbabwean refugees, unemployed and poor families with dependents between the age of 18 and 55 years who were prepared to forego all land rights in communal areas, experienced communal farmers prepared to forego communal land rights and give up any paid employment, and lastly communal farmers with Master Farmer Certificates. Despite the first phase of the land reform being well planned, the government only achieved 37% of the resettlement targets it had set (Masiwa & Chipungu, 2004). The failure of the first phase was attributed to lack of resources, limited capacity of implementing agencies, the rise in land prices (*Ibid*) and unwillingness of European commercial farmers to sell off the land to the Zimbabwean government (Malinga, 2018). Furthermore, there was absence of political will, government complacency and lethargy, nepotism and cronyism, inappropriate land tenure and the adoption of capitalistic policies such as Economic Structural Adjustment Programme which frustrated the set targets of the first phase of the land redistribution exercise (Masiwa & Chapungu, 2004).

To the tourism sector, the attainment of independence in 1980 brought positive growth in both receipts and arrivals to the Zimbabwe economy as the country was now considered a safe tourist destination. Historically, the period between 1980 and 1999 can best be described as the golden era of tourism in Zimbabwe. Tourism development is positively related to the economic development of a nation, which is largely dependent on policy formulation and implementation.

The Second Phase of the Land Reform Programme: 2000-2017

The failure of the first phase in resolving the land question forced the ZANU-PF government led by Robert Mugabe to introduce the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (Masiwa & Chipungu, 2004). The FTLRP was also termed the Third *Chimurenga* by the former President, Robert Mugabe, as he pointed out that it was the final war to comprehensively resolve the land question through forcibly grabbing land from the minority European farmers and redistributing it to the Zimbabwean majority without

compensation (Bonarjee, 2013; Cliffe, *et al.*, 2011; Hughes, 2010). This was touted as the best form of empowering the Zimbabwean masses, improving living standards and welfare of people by the Mugabe government (Chitsike, 2003).

Despite these pronouncements by the ZANU-PF government in justifying land reform from 2000, the political intentions of the FTLRP are, however, quite apparent. The FTLRP came immediately after the ZANU-PF party had suffered rejection during the constitutional referendum of February 2000 (Slaughter & Nolan, 2000). It was a wave of farm occupations led by members of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, party cadres and youths supported by the government (Chaumba *et al.*, 2004). The chaotic actions were accompanied by an increase in political violence as well as the collapse of the rule of law as the June 2000 Parliamentary and the March 2002 Presidential election campaigns took centre stage (*Ibid*). In this context, the FTLRP was part of ZANU PF's grassroots movement to destabilise the support base of the opposition MDC party (Chari, 2013; Willems, 2004).

After the land invasions had begun in February 2000, the FTLRP was officially launched on 15 July 2000 with an initial target of acquiring one million hectares for resettling 30 000 families (Masiwa & Chipungu, 2004). The FTLRP was modelled into A1 and A2 models. The A1 model targeted the rural landless peasants who were settled in villages or self-contained small farms of about five hectares for rainfall-fed farming purposes. The model is based on the village concept with grazing areas, communal residential but separate farming areas (Paradzayi, 2007). The model was designed to alleviate pressure on communal lands. The A2 model farms are larger than A1 model farms. The A2 model comprised of small scale, medium and large scale commercial farmers (Tom & Mutswanga, 2015). The owners are expected to engage in commercial agriculture production (*Ibid*). In regard to this, the Government of Zimbabwe has adopted a 99 year leasehold as a type of land tenure to the owners of A2 model (Paradzayi, 2007). The main objectives of the A2 model were to empower indigenous entrepreneurs in the economy of Zimbabwe, to break the gap between the European settler and indigenous

commercial farmers, to facilitate access to input support for commercial agriculture by individual farmers and to create a cadre of indigenous farmers (*Ibid*).

On the whole, the ZANU-PF government viewed the FTLRP as a programme leading to a shift of property ownership from settler commercial farmers to indigenous peasant producers and was a way of reversing the country's divided agrarian structure by race (Moyo & Chambati, 2013; Moyo, 2011). The FTLRP was scheduled to be completed within a period of three years, that is, it was planned to end in 2003 (Masiwa & Chipungu, 2004). However, the land invasions were still witnessed up to 2017 in some parts of the country (*The Financial Gazette*, 1 March 2018).

It should be emphasised that the FTLRP was characterised by nationwide farm invasions led by the war veterans (Chigumira, 2014). The invasions were to a larger extent violent and chaotic and brought negative impacts (Moyo, 2004). The fast track process has ignored the official structure which was meant to allocate land through the elected officials and civil service (Human Rights Watch report, 2002). The Fast Track programme has violated rights to equal protection of the law and non-discrimination (*Ibid*). This led the Government of Zimbabwe to be slapped with lawsuits from the white commercial farmers whose land was forcibly seized for redistribution leading to international condemnation (Masiwa & Chipungu, 2004; Moyo, 2004). Court judgments against the FTLRP were handed down but the Government of Zimbabwe did not respect them, arguing that the land issue was purely political and the judiciary had no role in solving the land question (Masiwa & Chipungu, 2004). The then Chief Justice, Antony Gubbay, was forced into early retirement allegedly due to increased political pressure from the government as he was deemed to be derailing the FTLRP (*Ibid*).

The poorly managed FTLRP led greatly to Zimbabwe's economic collapse as the country got sanctions from the western countries. This led to the dry up of donor funding for project development, foreign direct investment and banks line of credit (Ferreira, 2004). The agriculture sector was directly destroyed leading to a significant deterioration of agricultural production and food

availability (Moyo, 2004). To make matters worse, hyperinflation took centre stage from 2000 to 2008 when it reached 230 million per cent by the end of 2008 (Raftopoulos, 2009). This hyperinflation devalued the savings and earnings of the people. This was also accompanied by unemployment which went up to as high as 90% during the same period, political strife and instability as there were conflicts between the government and opposition and human rights groups, food riots and labour union strikes became prevalent (Ibid). Exports sharply declined with the import bill ballooning astronomically, thus leading to a huge trade deficit and a negative balance of payments status (*The Herald*, 8 April 2016).

In addition, relations with the international community were strained and in some cases severely damaged as there was a lot of controversy over the violent seizure of land without compensation (Malinga, 2018). A decline in social services and increased negative publicity of the country (Moyo, 2004) jeopardised the tourism and other sectors of the economy. This shows that the chaotic and often violent implementation of the FTLRP by the Robert Mugabe-led government destroyed the economic, social and political fabric of Zimbabwe.

The wildlife estate and tourism in Zimbabwe before the FTLRP

According to the *Conservation Imperative* (n.d.), the Wild life Conservation Act of 1960 led to the introduction of game ranching in Zimbabwe. The process was consolidated into a workable framework with the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 (*Ibid*). The Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 gave land owners the right to manage wildlife for their own benefit, thus providing an economic rationale to reinforce the scientific, aesthetic and moral justifications for wildlife conservation (Murindagomo, 1990). The landowners who were granted Appropriate Authority Status (AAS) could decide on the number and type of animals to be hunted, the place and time of the hunting, the sex and age of the animal as well as other conditions of hunting (Muir-Leresche & Nelson, 2000). In consultation with the

authority, the private ranch owners would run safari operations from their property or decide to lease the hunting rights to independent safari operators (*Ibid*). In addition, du Toit (2004) asserts that the self-interest in wildlife resource maintenance for sustainable financial gain and high level of conservation awareness among Zimbabwe's commercial ranchers generally served to prevent over-exploitation.

In 1990, the Parks and Wildlife Estate of Zimbabwe covered 12.7% of the country's total land area (Taylor, 1990). The wildlife estate is categorised into five areas namely: the national parks, sanctuaries, recreational parks, botanical gardens and conservancies. The national parks category has the largest share of 48% followed by private commercial lands constituting 31% (Muir-Leresche & Nelson, 2000). In many countries, the establishment of the wildlife reserves and national parks provides an environment in which wildlife is afforded protection from poachers (Ferreira, 2004).

During the 1990s, in areas such as Gwayi and Matetsi in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland provinces, as du Toit (2004) notes, wildlife production became the preoccupation of most farmers and cattle production was virtually abandoned. The main reason was that the farmers experienced financial losses from the cattle farming. Fences were removed to allow free movement of wildlife. Water supplies, accommodation units and roads were developed to cater for the safari industry (involving both hunting and photographic safaris, and aimed primarily at foreign markets).

A significant expansion in wildlife operations was also witnessed on Zimbabwe's Central Plateau during the 1990s and it ranged from intensive single-species production systems (ostriches and crocodiles) to intensive and semi-extensive multi-species production systems (*Ibid*). Because of the benefits derived from wildlife conservation some of the landowners understood that their farmlands were relatively small to provide adequate habitats for viable populations of the wildlife. This resulted in the formation of more mixed farming conservancies such as Musengezi, Ntabeni and Mtepatapa (*Ibid*). According to Kreuter and Workman (1994), the farmers who engaged in mixed ranching appeared to be economically, financially and ecologically optimal where wildlife were

abundant. This was based on the benefit of reduced environmental pressure and risk diversification on the land (*Ibid*).

From the 1980s, some Zimbabwean landowners realised that joint ventures could bring significant economies of scale in wildlife operations if they operated large conservancies. This led to the establishment of the Save Conservancy in south-eastern Zimbabwe, the largest in the country and covering an approximate of 340 000 hectares (Muir-Leresche & Nelson, 2000). The idea was considered to be a success as it managed to put in place favourable wildlife conditions. The operators reintroduced animals such as rhinoceros, buffalo, elephant, nyala, eland, tsessebe, giraffe, waterbuck, impala and zebra among others as a way of increasing biodiversity and giving better species mixes for consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife utilisation on a profit-making basis. This was as a result of privatisation of wildlife management (*Ibid*). Child (1988:526) notes that “wildlife ranching was most preferable as compared to cattle ranching in semi-arid regions of Zimbabwe because the profits from wildlife were twice as high as those from cattle relative to the limiting factor and wildlife has the ability to perform four to five times as well as cattle.” Jansen *et al* (1992) also observed that the highest profitability was obtained from the wildlife ranchers as compared to cattle ranchers with a return of 10.5 %. However, some wildlife ranchers suffered losses due to lack of management skills (*Ibid*).

In the 1990s an increasing amount of land was devoted to wildlife ranching with private ranches making significant contribution to the levels of species diversity in the country (Muir-Leresche & Nelson, 2000). du Toit (1998) notes that in 1997, approximately 77% of black rhinoceros, 32% of leopard was found on commercial ranches, 94% of eland on privately-owned and commercial ranch lands, 63% of the giraffe, 56% of cheetah , 64% of kudu and 53% of impala and sable were on privately-owned commercial farmlands.

du Toit (2004) further observed that the co-management of resources in the identified areas increased the network of protected wildlife. Consequently, wildlife tourism boomed in the private lands and the social life of the people was also uplifted as some of them were employed directly in the conservancies as game scouts while

others were recruited as drivers, rangers as well as trackers. Other staff members were indirectly employed in the kitchens or as lodge employees for the landowners who had built lodges or chalets to cater for tourists as well as hunters' accommodation. Some commercial hunters could spend 14 to 21 days hunting big game in state owned or privately-owned lands (Safari Club Foundation, 2015). The trophy hunters were assumed to spend more days in the destination waiting for the desired animal to be available in the authorised safari area (Ephraem, 2016). It was postulated that the professional hunters who came for trophy hunting would pay huge sums of money per day in food, lodging fees as well as on acquisition of the hunting permits (*Ibid*).

Muir-Leresche and Nelson (2000:10) postulate that the ranchers' benefits from wildlife operations were also augmented by the attraction of tourism to Zimbabwe that could offer benefits beyond the safari and the tour operators. In addition, enhanced biodiversity and reduction in rangeland erosion and degradation with consequent improvement in the overall environment quality of Zimbabwe also boosted the wildlife industry. On the same note, Hill (1994: 226) avers that wildlife ranching was considered as "one of the fastest growing new uses of commercial farming land in Zimbabwe along with growing horticultural and tobacco production."

As a result of strong wildlife conservation and management, Zimbabwe experienced a favourable tourism growth since the country embarked on wildlife ranching. The country benefited from consumptive and non-consumptive tourism activities in the 1990s. Consumptive tourism activities were mainly on trophy hunting, sale of hides and ivory while non-consumptive tourism activities comprised photographic, elephant/lion/horse riding and bird watching. Consumptive tourism has been in existence alongside non consumptive tourism in the country bringing economic and social benefits to Zimbabwe.

The FTLRP and wildlife tourism in Zimbabwe

Wildlife is an important source of non-consumptive tourism that can be fully utilised to benefit many people (Turner, 2004). Wildlife tourism has several advantages to sustainable development goals as it increases people's tolerance towards wild animals in particular and the environment in general. Wildlife tourism brings the much needed foreign currency (Barnes, 2001; Lindsey *et al.*, 2007), creates employment, and generally helps to improve the living standards of people and their communities. Wildlife tourism is considered a low hanging fruit and a tangible tool in development. The tourism industry can be used as a justification for involving communities in wildlife management and conservation programmes (Turner, 2004). However, in the Zimbabwean scenario, the tourism sector became a victim of FTLRP.

The FTLRP, which was mainly led by war veterans as well as ordinary landless Zimbabweans, resulted in the invasions of national parks and conservancies, some of which were the prime tourist resorts. Zimbabwe's wildlife is one of the best draw cards for tourism development. Gonarezhou National Park, which is part of the Greater Limpopo Trans-Frontier Park (GLTP), the second largest national park in the country, for example, was invaded. The sections of the park were occupied, cleared and set alight by neighbouring village people in 2000 (Sharman, 2001). Approximately 11 000 hectares on its northern side was invaded (du Toit, 2004) by the Chitsa people (Mombeshora & Le Bel, 2009). During 2001, the invasion of Gonarezhou was worsened by the Agricultural and Rural Extension Department (AGRITEX) which parcelled 520 plots (Ferreira, 2004) within the park to people purely for agricultural purposes (Chaumba, *et al.*, 2003) as part of the FTLRP land redistribution exercise. Chaumba *et al.* (2003) add that approximately 10 families from each village were allocated arable plots and communal grazing lands in the northern and southern parts of the park respectively.

As noted by Wolmer (2003), the Chitsa villagers got official permits to reside, keep livestock and cultivate in the park from the

then Provincial Governor of Masvingo, Josiah Hungwe, and the District Administrator. All the invasions and subsequent approvals were believed to have taken place without the knowledge and consent of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism under which the Gonarezhou National Park fell (Ferreira, 2004; Mombeshora & Le Bel, 2009). With the invasions, the villagers allowed their cattle to graze in the park, a development that increased the chances of outbreaks of foot and mouth diseases. Park fences were destroyed and this exposed wildlife to poaching, much to the detriment of the tourism sector.

Land invasion by subsistence farmers and war veterans was also severe in Save Limpopo Lowveld Region. The affected conservancies in the region included the Chiredzi River, Save Valley, Bubiana and Buby River which were famed for housing black rhinoceros (Buby Valley Conservation, n.d.). The Save Conservancy, a prime wildlife tourism attraction in the Lowveld, for instance, was invaded to the detriment of the tourism industry (Madava, 2012). To make matters worse, the invasions were led by provincial and national leaders of the country and the police could not do anything. As a result of the invasion, local people and other opportunist entrepreneurs removed fences and pegged fields for themselves. They also destroyed vegetation in an effort to clear land for farming, securing firewood, thatching and hunting (Wolmer, 2004). In the process game scouts were attacked, spurring poaching for subsistence and commercial purposes.

According to du Toit (2004), poaching was rampant in the Save Valley Conservancy, the country's largest conservancy. It was recorded that from the 1st of August 2001 to mid-May 2003, the conservancy recorded 823 poaching incidents in which wild animals were killed, and 23 253 wire snares were recovered (*Ibid.*: 22). Lindsey *et al* (2011) add that between August 2001 and June 2009, approximately 4 148 poachers were arrested and more than 84 000 wire snares were removed in the Save Valley Conservancy. These wire snares were made from the fence that had previously been erected around the conservancy to contain the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (du Tout, 2004; Lindsey *et al.*, 2011). By 2003, an

estimated 2 103 animals had been poached as shown in table 1.1. By June 2009, the number of poached animals had increased to 6 454 (Lindsey *et al.*, 2011).

Table 1.1: Species allegedly poached from Save Valley Conservancy, 1 August 2001 to mid-May 2003

Type of animal	Number of animals poached
Black Rhino	1
Buffalo	3
Bushbuck	14
Bushpig	21
Kudu	401
Leopard	1
Nyala	3
Cheetah	1
Duiker	5
Eland	102
Elephant	6
Small animals	376
Ostrich	1
Warthog	236
Pythons	4
Waterbuck	33
Sable	9
Wildebeest	64
Wild dog	9
Giraffe	7
Impala	728
Zebra	78
Total	2103

Source: du Toit, 2004.

Table 1.1 above shows that both common and endangered species were treated as prey. The highest population of poached animals like the small animals (376), kudu (401), impala (728), eland (102) and warthog (236), among others, were a result of wire snares as well as pit traps which were the most popular traditional hunting methods used by the local villagers. Most of the larger animals were left with deep wounds from the snares used by local people and failure to attend to them led to their death. Some of the bigger

animals were killed by commercial poachers from other parts of the country as well as outsiders, as people took advantage of the instable situation in the region. This was supported by Coles (2007:1) who quotes Karen Paolillo saying: 'They are killing everything and anything from a squirrel to an elephant for food and money.' This implies that the local people were desperate because of the instable situation, hunger as well as poverty in the country.

The population of the black rhino in the Save Lowveld region deteriorated drastically as a result of poaching activities and disturbances due to land invasions (du Toit, 2004). Four hippos disappeared from Karen and Jean's haven on the Tugwi River in the privately-owned Save Valley Conservancy immediately after it was occupied (Coles, 2007). In a country wrecked by socio-economic hardships characterised by chronic food shortages, empty shops and skyrocketing inflation, among other things, hippopotamus meat became an important source of food. In addition, the hippo tusk-like teeth could be sold as an alternative to elephant ivory as people sought livelihoods (Knapp, 2012; Moss, 2007).

Duri (2018) adds that there was a critical challenge of food shortages that was worsened by the 2001-2002 drought as well as the government's mismanagement of the economy. This debilitating situation resulted in the dramatic escalation of conflicts between human beings and animals as they scrambled for food in the wilderness. Hunger and poverty among the Zimbabwean rural people motivated humans to survive on wild fauna and flora in protected areas (*Ibid*). The FTLRP in Zimbabwe also largely contributed to human-wildlife conflict as people were resettled in hinterlands of parks without proper planning (Shumba *et al.*, 2011). Dube and Moyo (2004) note that in areas such as the Woodlands Resettlement Area near the Matetsi Ranch, many villagers constantly clashed with wild animals such as lions, hyenas, leopards, elephants and buffalos. While the loss of human life during such clashes is regrettable, many wild animals were also killed, much to the detriment of the tourism industry.

Although poaching was intensive in the Lowveld region, other parts of country were not spared. In early 2000, the Chizarira

National Park also suffered from the depletion of buffalos, elephants as well as antelopes as a result of poaching (Expert Africa, n.d.). The main reasons put forward for the increase in poaching included crop failures within the surrounding villages, and the country's economic strife that engulfed the economy (*Ibid*; du Toit, 2004). In 2003, the Sinamatella area of the Hwange National Park lost approximately 25 rhinos due to commercial poaching from Zambian poachers (du Toit, 2004). Indeed, Game and Hunt (2002) rightly stated that poaching reached alarming levels as a result of Mugabe's Fast Track Land Reform policy. Dube and Moyo (2015) also added that many people went to the extent of poisoning water sources to kill wild animals like elephants for food and ivory. In the Hwange National Park, for example, elephants suffered from cyanide poisoning (*Ibid*).

Ferreira (2004) observed that the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) was destroyed in Zimbabwe by the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The sad reality is that Zimbabwe before the FTLRP, CAMPFIRE used to be a leading advocate on issues of natural resources use in rural areas. Its good work of several years dating back to the 1990s was destroyed by the land reform programme within a very short period of time (*Ibid*). This shows that wildlife management programmes became ineffective as many newly-resettled farmers became law unto them and encroached into wildlife habitats, often resulting in clashes between the people and wild animals (Ferreira, 2006). Moyo (2004) argued that wildlife-based tourism was one of the major victims of the FTLRP as tourist visits and arrivals to wildlife habitats declined by more than 30% by 2004 due to negative publicity generated by the violent land reform programme. The situation was negatively compounded by widespread poaching of wildlife as well as conversion for some private wildlife conservancies to mixed farming. Instead of improving the living standards of the black majority, the FTLRP brought about widespread poverty, hyperinflation, high unemployment, foreign currency shortages, commodity hoardings, erosion of incomes, as well as political tension and instability (Moyo, 2004). The CAMPFIRE funds were diverted to personal needs

because of hunger (*Ibid*). All these consequential ills negatively affected tourism performance and development in Zimbabwe.

As Moyo (*Ibid*) aptly posited, the FTLRP negatively affected wildlife-based tourism, which in turn led to a drastic decline in tourist arrivals. The decline was due to the negative publicity on Zimbabwe during the FTLRP, increased wildlife poaching and conversion of some private wildlife conservancies to mixed farming operations. Because of these developments, one can conclude that the FTLRP ignored the co-existence of people and wildlife.

The FTLRP and the Zimbabwe's natural environment

The FTLRP ignored the reasons for the shift from agriculture to wildlife in some country's regions and resulted in the replacement of viable wildlife operations with unsuitable farming practices (Williams *et al.*, 2016). The FTLRP had mixed impacts on natural resources management in Zimbabwe. The natural resources of the country include the vegetation, water and the soils. The major land use systems which were associated with the land reform programme in the country included settlement, mining and farming. The land where settlement was established included structures such as houses, schools, clinics, offices as well as commercial shops. The farming aspect involved activities such as grazing, cultivation and other agro-related activities. Informal mining activities, such as gold panning, also sprouted in the new resettlement area.

To a large extent, the environment suffered immense damage as a result of the FTLRP. According to Scoones *et al* (2010), the beneficiaries of the FTLRP obtained access to natural resources and land but it came at great cost to both society and biodiversity conservation. Many newly-resettled farmers had no knowledge of conservation farming. In addition, there was no close supervision of their operations and given the rush with which the programme was implemented, the biggest victim of the FTLRP was the natural environment (Moyo, 2004).

Although the Government of Zimbabwe came up with a policy document on natural resources management during the FTLRP, the

policy had several shortcomings. The policy was not specific as to what was to be done to enhance sustainable utilisation of resources in the resettlement areas. The policy did not specify areas to be strictly used for wildlife projects, livestock projects and arable-related projects and this created serious problems concerning natural resources management. These observations were also noted by Williams *et al* (2016) who pointed out that the FTLRP ignored the reasons for the shift from agriculture to wildlife and resulted in the replacement of viable wildlife operations with unsustainable farming practices.

To set the record straight, there was rampant deforestation as well as widespread veld fire occurrences during the FTLRP as some resettled farmers went on a hunting spree of small game such as rabbits using unorthodox means which include the burning of forests and grasslands to catch rabbits. In some areas such as the Nyanga Mountains (between Honde Valley and Nyanga National Park) patches of mature lowland forest were felled together with less valuable regrowth forests along the Chitema and Nyamhingura rivers, and along the road extending northwards through the Eastern Highlands Tea Estates parallel to Nyangombe River (du Toit, 2004). According to SWECO *et al* (2004), a group of families settled in the forest area on the western boundary of the Eastern Highlands Estate. This resulted in deforestation to pave way for cultivation. Under Mutasa District Council, six villages were established in the Mtarazi Section of the Nyanga National Park. In addition, some villagers settled in Gleneagles Nature Reserve which is adjacent to the Aberfoyle Tea Estate (*Ibid*). These people felled many trees which used to be attractions for tourists who enjoyed bird-watching.

There was no specification from the government on how the A1 and A2 farmers were to utilise natural resources within their surroundings. The policy was somehow a one-size-fits-all yet the reality on the ground reflected a multifaceted picture of different groups of farmers that required totally different approaches. Moyo (2004) pointed out that natural resources in newly-resettled farming areas faced abuse, under-exploitation and in some case overexploitation as evidenced by widespread poaching,

unprecedented levels of deforestation and high incidences of veld fires. Some newly resettled farmers went on the rampage cutting down trees for commercial firewood trading in urban areas which were also hard hit by severe electricity shortages as well as erratic supplies. For instance, bundles of firewood were displayed for sale along main roads near major towns like Harare, Bulawayo and Victoria Falls. Besides selling it, firewood was, and still is, the most used source of energy for domestic use in resettlement areas since villagers lack the financial resources to purchase gas, paraffin or electricity. The newly-resettled farmers also cut down a lot of trees to construct temporary accommodation, cattle pens and in some, to fence off for their homes and fields. Other people harvested hardwood in order to carve curios (Dube & Moyo, 2015). These developments led to the depletion of forests, some of which, together with the animals that used them as habitat, had previously been major tourist attractions.

In some newly-resettled areas, Moyo (2004) observed that there was a major shift in the source of energy for tobacco curing from coal to wood, a development that threatened forests and woodlots through the extensive cutting down of trees. The Zimbabwe Tobacco Association showed that one hectare of a Eucalyptus woodlot produces 31 cubic metres of wood while 4 cubic metres is required to cure 1 000 kilograms of tobacco. Moyo (2004) posits that the country's annual tobacco crop of about 200 million kilograms required 800 000 cubic metres of firewood from an area of about 35 000 hectares. Given the extent to which many resettled farmers used firewood to cure tobacco, these figures illuminate how the FTLRP brought a lot of negative environmental impacts to the detriment of the tourism industry. This also meant that tobacco farming practices of newly-resettled farmers were largely unsustainable and caused extensive environmental degradation. The major cause of over reliance on wood fuel for tobacco curing was due to inaccessibility of coal by the newly-resettled farmers. To mitigate this environmental catastrophe, the government, through the Forestry Commission, attempted to assist farmers to establish woodlot plantations under a reforestation programme (*Ibid*, 2004; Tom, 2015). However, the

Forestry Commission failed to adequately promote woodlot development among the A1 and A2 farmers and this resulted in the degradation of forests without replenishment (Moyo, 2004). In all this, the wildlife-based tourism industry suffered immensely from loss of vegetation.

Furthermore, stream-bank cultivation was another vice on the hydrological and physical environment which became rampant in the resettlement areas established by the FTLRP in Zimbabwe. Essential water bodies were disturbed and some were completely destroyed due to severe siltation, widespread gully formation as well as unprecedented levels of soil erosion. The wetlands in the provinces of Manicaland and the Midlands were mostly affected by the encroachment of the agricultural activities of the newly-resettled farmers (Mubvami, 2004). These environmental vices were exacerbated by a vague and ineffective natural resources management policy that did not address issues to do with increasing the productivity of wildlife, forests and woodlands. The policy did not provide for measures to ensure increased biodiversity and protection of endangered species in resettlement areas (Moyo, 2004). Indeed, as Moyo notes, protected species were not planned for in terms when the FTLRP was launched.

Moreover, the FTLRP brought an increase in illegal gold-panning activities across the country (Moyo, 2011). Some of the participants in the illegal mining activities were the jobless citizens who had previously been employed at the invaded white-owned commercial farms. In addition, some villagers who were lucky to be resettled in areas rich in gold abandoned farming for illegal mining. In many such areas, illegal mining rackets mushroomed, causing further damage to the environment. In particular, the Midlands Province was greatly affected by the activities of gold panners. Moyo (2004) bemoaned the lack of a comprehensive plan by the government to guide gold panning and improve environmental management. To this end, the government also lost revenue as a result of the illegal gold panning activities. In addition, illegal mining activities caused extensive land degradation and deforestation, which severely depleted many tourist attractions such as forests and water bodies. Thus, the FTLRP was

done in a hurried manner without a proper plan such that it became unsustainable in commercial and environmental terms.

The increased human population within newly-resettled areas brought more negative impacts on the environment which among them included environmental degradation as a result of poor farming practices, pollution, deforestation, veld fires and poaching. Environmental degradation was also aggravated by inappropriate land use, for example, cultivating on land more suitable for ranching or vice versa (Moyo, 2004). In other resettled areas, the local people did not have proper sanitation facilities which forced them to use bush toilets and water from rivers for domestic use. During the rainy season these could pollute the water and cause diseases such as cholera, typhoid and diarrhoea. In 2008, the country suffered from the outbreak of cholera thereby adversely affecting the number of tourists visiting the country (ZTA Report, 2008).

It is clear that the tourism industry is primarily dependent on the natural environment. Whatever negative effects are suffered by the environment, as was the case in Zimbabwe after the launch of the FTLRP, would directly or indirectly impact on the tourism industry. Tourism sector is very fragile. Without doubt, the tourism industry was one of the biggest victim and casualty of the FTLRP in Zimbabwe.

Tourism performance in Zimbabwe: before, during and after the FTLRP

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the performance of Zimbabwe's tourism industry from 1980 to 2017. The FTLRP was vigorously implemented during the period 2000 to about 2006 and to a lesser extent up to 2017 but the effects are still being experienced even today in 2018. A comparative examination of the period 1980 to 1999 versus 2000 to 2017 will be undertaken. The performance is hereby presented in the form of tourist arrivals, tourism receipts and occupancies. These details are shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Zimbabwe's tourist arrivals, receipts, room and bed occupancies (1980-2017)

Year	Arrivals	Receipts (US\$ million)	Average Room Occupancy %	Average Bed Occupancy %
1980	237 668	38	N/A	N/A
1981	313 866	45.5	N/A	N/A
1982	276 910	35.7	N/A	N/A
1983	230 437	24.9	N/A	N/A
1984	254 335	26.0	N/A	N/A
1985	303 387	24	N/A	N/A
1986	318 666	29.3	N/A	N/A
1987	339 328	32.9	N/A	N/A
1988	412 212	24.5	N/A	N/A
1989	435 875	40.1	N/A	N/A
1990	582 602	60	N/A	N/A
1991	607 029	55	N/A	N/A
1992	675 187	96	N/A	N/A
1993	879 501	96	N/A	N/A
1994	1 039 013	125	N/A	N/A
1995	1 415 535	145	N/A	N/A
1996	1 596 696	232	N/A	N/A
1997	1 335 580	205	51%	52%
1998	2 090 407	158	57%	53%
1999	2 249 615	202	56%	42%
2000	1 966 582	125	40%	29%
2001	2 217 429	81	43%	31%
2002	2 041 202	76	49%	36%
2003	2 256 205	61	46%	39%
2004	1 854 488	194	43%	30%
2005	1 558 501	99	39%	28%
2006	2 286 572	338	34%	25%
2007	2 505 988	365	45%	31%
2008	1 955 594	294	42%	32%
2009	2 017 264	523	46%	35%
2010	2 239 165	634	52%	36%
2011	2,423,280	662	52%	37%
2012	1,794,230	749	52%	37%
2013	1,832,570	856	48%	37%
2014	1,880,028	827	48%	36%
2015	2,056,588	886	47%	31%
2016	2,167,686	819	46%	33%
2017	2,422,930	917	48%	35%

Key: N/A = Not Available

Source: Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (2017)

During the land reform policy of 1980 to 1999, tourism grew phenomenally in terms of both receipts and arrivals in Zimbabwe (ZTA report, 1999). During that era, as table 1.2 above shows, tourism arrivals grew from 237 668 in 1980 to 1 335 580 in 1997, and to its highest of 2 249 615 in 1999. Tourism receipts as well grew from US\$38 million in 1980 to US\$80 million in 1997 and to US\$202 million in 1999 (*Ibid*). Heath (1992) notes that the major contributing factor was the peaceful conduct of the land reform which saw visitations to the national parks rising from 161 572 in 1980 to 719 347 in 1990, thus showing a percentage rise of over 300% in wildlife tourism. The 1990 to 1997 period saw the industry registering a 130% increase in tourist arrivals and 241% rise in income received. This growth was attributed to a stable and gradualist policy promulgation and implementation including the land reform policy of willing-buyer willing-seller (Moyo, 2004). The policy also encouraged people to conserve wildlife in their farms. The statistics show that tourism before the FTLRP underwent a positive growth trajectory for the good of the economy.

In 2000, due to the FTLRP, tourist arrivals went down to 1 966 582, thus declining by 13% in just 12 months between the years 1999 and 2000. Tourism receipts fell by US\$77 million from US\$202 million in 1999 to US\$125 million in 2000, thus registering a 38% decrease in receipts just within a year of the implementation of the FTLRP. The period 2001 to 2005 witnessed the worst performance of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe. It is also during this period that the FTLRP was at its peak (Moyo, 2004). Tourist arrivals fell from 2249 615 in 1999 to 1 558 501 in 2005, registering a 31% decrease. On the other hand, tourism receipts fell from US\$202 million in 1999 to US\$99 million in 2005, thus registering a 51% decrease. The decline in performance, as shown by arrivals and receipts, was a direct result of the FTLRP that heightened insecurity and caused bad international publicity of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

According to Moyo (2004), the FTLRP bred increased political conflict with Western countries and reduced international support which resulted in the deterioration of the Zimbabwean economy. The occupancy in the hotel and accommodation sector also

plummeted as a result of the decline in tourist arrivals. The figures showed that average hotel occupancy fell from 57% in 1999 to 34% in 2006 which was complemented by a fall of bed occupancy from 42% in 1999 to 25% in 2006. A comparison between 2009 and 2013 of bed and room capacities also showed that growth has been virtually stagnant. Room capacity grew by 1% from 6 360 rooms in 2009 to 6 427 rooms in 2013 and the number of rooms in Zimbabwe declined to 6 189 in 2016. In terms of bed capacity, the total number declined by 0.8% from 12 190 in 2009 to 12 081 in 2013. On a bad note again, both room and bed capacity declined to 6 189 and 11 907 respectively in 2016 (ZTA Report, 2016). In 2017, an average occupancy of 48% was recorded (ZTA report, 2017) which is still below that of 1999 which was 56%. This shows an indication of the deteriorating situation in the tourism industry in Zimbabwe. This stagnant growth is attributable to the impact of the FTLRP which had far reaching negative effects on the economic, political and social environment in Zimbabwe.

Even beyond 2006, with the accompanying worsening economy from 2007 to 2008, the tourism industry continued to decline due to international negative publicity which was originally sparked by the FTLRP. The 2007 statistics from ZTA, however, seem to be biased and raise a lot of questions since the country was suffering from inflation, food shortages, erratic fuel supplies and shortages of foreign currency. One can argue that there were no positive contributing factors to tourism development in the country during that period. Targeted sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe. Ferreira (2004) asserts that a greater proportion of self-drive tourists from South Africa disappeared due to political insecurity that directly emanated from the FTLRP in Zimbabwe. Travel bans were also issued by key tourist generating states such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and United States of America in response to the violent and chaotic implementation of the land reform programme after the year 2000 (Rusike & Chitambara, 2012).

According to the ZTA (2009), several lodges and hotels like the Inn on Rugarara, Nyanga Village Inn, the Chizarira Wilderness Lodge and Angler's Rest, among others, closed operations due to

substantial decline in tourist arrivals in the country. However to those who endured, there were massive retrenchments of labour force and a wide deterioration of services. As a result of instabilities, most of the experienced tourism and hospitality personnel left the country for greener pastures leaving the country with inadequate manpower for the best service delivery (Dakwa, 2018).

It has been a difficult journey for Zimbabwe's tourism sector from 2000. The FTLRP brought severe harm and damage to the development of the tourism industry in Zimbabwe, particularly during the period 2000 to 2017 and the negative impacts are still being felt even up to the present day. Most of the challenges that emanated from the FTLRP cannot be easily resolved due to Zimbabwe's deepening governance crisis and continued bad international publicity.

Conclusion

This chapter has unravelled the nexus between land reform policies and tourism. It has argued that Robert Mugabe's Fast-Track Land Reform Programme left a disastrous legacy for Zimbabwe's tourism industry. The FTLRP brought immense collateral damage to the country's image internationally, thus affecting tourism arrivals and receipts in Zimbabwe. The economic hardships emanating from the programme eroded people's disposable incomes and poverty levels increased thereby negatively affecting the participation of locals in domestic tourism. Since its inception of the FTLRP, the Zimbabwean economy in general and the tourism industry in particular have not recovered. The tourism industry and the economy of Zimbabwe are still reeling from the negative impacts of the FTLRP.

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Robert Mugabe and the Politicisation of Heritage in Post-1980 Zimbabwe: Land Heritage as a Tool for Political Leveraging and Gimmicking

Tapuwa Raymond Mubaya

Introduction

It was at the World Earth Summit held in South Africa in September 2002 amid the course of state-sponsored invasions of white-owned commercial farms in Zimbabwe that Mugabe denounced the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, telling him to keep his Britain and allowing him to keep his Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Similarly, while addressing thousands of his ruling ZANU-PF party supporters in the farming town of Marondera in Zimbabwe, the former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, had this to say: "... We told (the then British Premier) Tony Blair to keep his England and we keep our Zimbabwe because land is our heritage" (*African Independent*, 23 June 2017).

Drawing from the quotations above, heritage in Zimbabwe as elsewhere, has been and is still being used as a tool or vehicle to further and quench the insatiable political whims of those in power. Echoing similar sentiments, Lowenthal (1985) argues that "each political regime introduces symbols and values that signify its authority" (p. 129). In the same vein, Manetsi (2017) corroborates the above line of thinking when he asserts that "the politics of the regime in power tend to take precedence in the governance of heritage resources" (p. 24).

In light of the assertions above, several cases across the globe abound, where heritage has either been jealously conserved or completely obliterated to achieve certain despicable political agendas. Some of the better documented examples of this include the demolition of cultural sites that accompanied the disintegration of

Yugoslavia (Chapman, 1994; Šulc, 2005; Smith, 2008) and the controlled destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Afghan government in 2001 (Flood, 2002). Unquestionably, these deliberate politically motivated acts of desecration and violation were intended to both deny unwanted and heterogeneous versions of past and present, and to cause hurt to those that held them to be valuable (Meskell, 2002b).

Indubitably, heritage claims whether based in the practice of archaeology or the preservation of cultural artefacts, have long been recognised to bolster discourses of nationalism (Trigger, 1984), identity (Meskell, 2002b), belonging and exclusion (Silverman, 2005). It is worth noting that seasoned and shrewd political figures, when politically cornered, often turn to heritage to save their political faces as well as to entice the disillusioned electorate into supporting them.

Such a scenario is what exactly obtained in Zimbabwe where Robert Gabriel Mugabe, who when trapped between a hard rock and a hard surface in 2000, made a suicidal move of supporting his ZANU-PF intimidating war veterans and marauding supporters to unconstitutionally and chaotically occupy violently commercial farms occupied by the former colonial administrators as an indirect guarantor of their votes in the looming elections (Maposa *et al.* 2013). While the move received mixed feelings across the Zimbabwean political divide and the international community at large, these unplanned and uncoordinated land seizures and “invasions” at least enabled Mugabe to save himself from the imminent political axe hanging on his neck in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a formidable opposition political party that had been formed in 1999 under the leadership of the late Morgan Tsvangirai. Since then, Mugabe’s ZANU-PF led-government survived and thrived by using heritage, particularly land, as a political shield to dispel and pacify opposition political parties.

It is important to set the record straight that since his ascendancy to power on 18 April 1980, Mugabe made a fervent declaration that the land (which constitutes one of the country’s most valuable heritage) and which was fraudulently and unjustifiably taken from its rightful owners during the colonial period through the obnoxious

Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Land Husbandry Act of 1951, which condemned the indigenous people of Zimbabwe to squat in reserves known as the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) (Maposa *et al.* 2013), would soon be given back to the majority indigenous masses (*African Independent*, 23 June (2017). Additionally, as a way of righting past injustices perpetrated on the indigenous populace by the former colonial administrators (Winter, 2010), Mugabe strategically employed heritage as a political tool to forge national identity and nationhood.

In order to fulfil this objective, he made sure that all key institutions, organisations and departments dealing directly or indirectly with heritage fell under the ambit of the state. In line with this development, Mugabe's government crafted heritage policies and legislation aimed at countering and rewriting the distorted and misinterpreted liberation history of the country (Mubaya *et al.* 2016). Besides, a new enterprising form of heritage code-named "Liberation Heritage," which culminated in the establishment of the National Heroes Acre in Harare (Duri 2016), and the subsequent establishment of Provincial and District Heroes Acres, war memorials and liberation shrines in and outside the country, emerged (Mubaya *et al.* 2016). While the move superficially appears to be noble, the ultra-motive hidden in this seemingly altruistic gesture was to use heritage as both a bait and a tool to garner political support as well as to legitimise his continued grip on power.

Against this background, this chapter examines the extent to which the former ZANU-PF government of Robert Mugabe used heritage, particularly land, as a political bait to manipulate votes as well as to outmanoeuvre its political opponents. The chapter then makes the argument that besides benefiting his top political cronies as well as ZANU-PF supporters and war veterans, the land reform programme was a self-enriching and self-aggrandising project especially when considering the number of farms acquired by Mugabe himself and his top ruling party officials. Admittedly, people were given land on the basis of their political connections and persuasions, rather than their economic need, or agricultural skills (Winter, 2010). In this chapter, attention is drawn to the political

nature of heritage and how it was politicised by Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party to gain political mileage. The chapter concludes that inasmuch as heritage is an important resource in the construction of collective identity and nation building, it is more often than not, used and abused to pursue and fulfil certain political agendas.

Profiling the mixed personalities of Robert Gabriel Mugabe

This section presents the humble beginnings of Robert Mugabe and how he is viewed and perceived by people from different political persuasions. It is these varied opinions and sometimes conflicting perceptions that crystallise into what this chapter refers to as mixed personalities of Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Before delving into the mixed personalities of Mugabe, it is prudent to present the prevailing ideological background which ultimately shaped and influenced his future political career which, fortunately or unfortunately, ended in circumstances reminiscent of a drama on 21 November 2017.

Born and bred in Kutama Village of colonial Zimbabwe, then known as Southern Rhodesia, in a humble Catholic family of six on the 21st of February 1924, Robert Gabriel Mugabe was an exceptionally exemplary and bright student (Holland, 2008). His father, Gabriel Chatunga Matibili, was a carpenter by profession and his mother, Bona, was a Roman Catholic Catechist Teacher (*Ibid*). He studied in all-exclusive Jesuit Roman Catholic schools and also attended the Kutama College, where he is believed to have led a solitary life and preferred to keep company with his books (Meredith, 2002). After attaining his teaching diploma in 1945, Robert Gabriel Mugabe held multiple teaching positions at various mission schools in Southern Rhodesia, before scooping a scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Fort Hare University College in South Africa in 1949 (Groves, 2009). It was at Fort Hare University that Robert Gabriel Mugabe's political career was nurtured. It was also at Fort Hare University that he was first exposed to Marxist thought and the nationalist movement (Norman, 2008; Holland, 2008), which later influenced his political career.

Upon returning to the then Southern Rhodesia after the completion of his degree in 1952, Robert Mugabe had become disenchanted with the colonial system and yet he remained distant to the calls for independence and resistance (Holland, 2008). His move to Ghana in 1958 after receiving a generous expatriate teacher-training package greatly transformed and enhanced his political career. While in Ghana, Mugabe underwent ideological training at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba during the period 1958-60 while teaching at Apowa Secondary School in Takoradi (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

Influenced by political events unfolding in Ghana, Mugabe became enamoured with the prospect of an independent and unified Africa. However, it was on a visit to the then Southern Rhodesia in May 1960 to introduce his fiancée, a Ghanaian teacher, Sally Hayfron, to his parents that Mugabe became a fully awakened nationalist by protesting the arrest of friends belonging to the National Democratic Party (NDP) and taking part in what has become known as the March of the Seven Thousand (Holland, 2008; Groves, 2009). The march was a protest against the arrest of leaders of the African nationalist movement. This transformative experience prompted Mugabe to resign his post in Ghana and become a full-time political activist (Groves, 2009).

Interestingly, for the greater part of the 1960s, Mugabe, along with the majority of high-ranking Zimbabwean nationalists, was held in indefinite detention. Between his arrest in 1963, and his release in 1974, Mugabe underwent intense personal and ideological evolutions brought on by the death of his three-year-old son Nhamo and his continued academic studies (Holland 2008). Emerging from his 11 years of imprisonment, Mugabe was dedicated to the cause of revolutionary struggle and the freedom of Zimbabwe from the tyranny of the colonial minority rule (Groves, 2009). Nevertheless, his soft-spoken nature, brilliant intellect, and single-minded ambition served as both a source of admiration and caution amongst his fellow nationalists (*Ibid*).

Upon his release, Mugabe was determined to reconstitute the liberation struggle under the Zimbabwe African National Union

(ZANU) banner (Holland, 2008). In November 1974, he was elected by ZANU to replace Ndabaningi Sithole as President. However, by 1977, primarily due to his efforts in organising liberation fighters in Mozambique, the assassination of popular ZANLA Chairman, Herbert Chitepo, and his ability to discredit Sithole, Mugabe was able to gain the support of liberation fighters and bring ZANU fully under his control, forcing his immediate recognition as the primary leader of armed resistance in Rhodesia (Holland, 2008; Groves, 2009).

By 1976, the pressures of constant warfare had exacerbated the decade-old embargos of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and forced the Rhodesian government to adjust its stance on majority rule. After being rejected in its earlier advances by the nationalists, the Smith regime finally submitted to an internal settlement that would grant majority rule while protecting colonial interests (Groves, 2009). This move angered ZANU and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), whose military wing, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) was also engaged in the anti-colonial armed struggle alongside the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), ZANU's military wing (*Ibid*). However, when it became clear in mid-1979 that the British government would not recognise the new Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government under Bishop Abel Muzorewa that had been brought about by the internal settlement, all Zimbabwean nationalist organisations joined in new negotiations at Lancaster House in London in 1979 (*Ibid*).

After three months of intense debate and bargaining, an agreement was reached that established a new Constitution and procedures for a transfer of power. In mid-December, British authority was temporarily reinstated and a cease-fire effected, and United Nations sanctions lifted. From February 27-29, 1980, closely supervised elections were held that included nine political parties (*Ibid*). The Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU- PF) won an overwhelming majority of 57% and 63% of the vote. Mugabe became the Prime Minister while Canaan Banana, a Methodist minister and long-time advocate for racial justice, was became the President (Holland, 2008).

That said, it is important to note that Robert Mugabe is not just one of the founding fathers of post-colonial Zimbabwe but he is also a principled ideologist whose policies have created the legacy of Mugabeism, and like every other lasting ideologist, there will be admirers and disputants to his ideas (Wafawarova, 2018). Mugabeism is an ideology that believes in not only the transference of political power, but also an unwavering commitment to shift the means of production—land, minerals, and corporations—from the privileged colonial minority to the Zimbabwean majority (Chengu, 2018). For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), what is termed ‘Mugabeism’ is a summation of a constellation of political controversies, political behaviour, political ideas, utterances, rhetoric and actions that have crystallised around Mugabe’s political life.

According to Macuphula, “thinkers and writers will be seized with Mugabeism for a very long time to come, far and beyond the man’s death” (Wafawarova, 2018: 5). Macuphula went further asserting that reactions to Mugabe’s legacy range from worship to caricature (*Ibid*). Echoing similar sentiments, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) also maintains that Mugabe has emerged as one of the most controversial political figures since 2000, eliciting both admiration and condemnation. Yet for Wafawarova (2018), what is idolised by some, and abhorred by others is not Robert Mugabe the political person, but the revolutionary principles and ideas for which the man stood for (*Ibid*). Indeed to his critics, Robert Mugabe is a detestable villain who painstakingly carries an image of a monster so immune to mortality, and his long life becomes a bitter pill to swallow (*Ibid*).

Yet, for his many admirers in Africa and across the world, Mugabe is the arbiter of social justice, the voice of the oppressed, the ambassador of equality in international affairs, and the darling brave one who knows how best to tell bullish supremacist Westerners that slavery and colonial dominance are dead and buried in the world of the modern day African, dead like white occupation of farmlands in Zimbabwe (Holland, 2008).

The land heritage: Mugabe's major post-independence quagmire

Land is a place to be born, a place to grow up, a place to call home, and a place to be buried. Land is a source of food, a livelihood, and an asset to bequeath to our next generations. Above all else, land is a source of African pride. Land is never merely land (Chengu, 2018: 5).

In unison with the above anecdote, Dube (2017), articulates that land is inter-connected with the intricacies of human, animal and plant life, as well as the spiritual and atmospheric realms. He went further asserting that land is the spiritual home of the ancestors, making it the reservoir of intangible heritage; the source of chiefly spiritual and political authority as the visible guardian of the land (*Ibid*). In the same vein, Malcolm X, cited in Foner (1970: 1), avers that, "Land is the basis of independence." In conformity with Malcom X, Turner quoted by Foner (1970: 1), aptly stated that, "Without control over land, resources and production, there can be no self-determination for a people."

Emphatically, Foner (1970: 1) reiterated that, "a real nationalism is based on the relationship of a people to a land." In light of this, it is an indisputable fact that land is a universal capital good which constitutes the best economic value to humanity on any part of the globe (Kajau, 2015). From the foregoing, it is evident that land has emotive overtones everywhere in Africa especially where there have been extensive colonial dispossessions of the indigenous people's land (Sibanda, 2010). According to Mugabe, the return of land to its rightful owners marked the completion of the decolonisation process. For him, land was not a mere commodity of production but a marker of African being (Chaumba *et al.* 2003). The loss of land through colonial conquest went deeper in meaning than the mere loss of the means of production. It amounted to the loss of Africanhood (*Ibid*). It therefore does not come as much of a surprise when the land is referred to as *nhaka yedu* ('our heritage') by the majority Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe. *The Patriot* (26 January 2017: 1) sums it thus: "The land is us and we are the land." Thus, in Zimbabwe land

is regarded as the mainstay of the country's economy. This is in sync with ZANU-PF's parlance which says, "The economy is land and land is the economy" (Team ZANU-PF, 2013: 1).

Drawing from the above quotations, it is a truism that Zimbabwe's hard fought liberation struggle was largely prompted by the disgruntlements over the land inequalities and the need to reclaim land which was grabbed by the colonial administrators upon their ascendancy to power in 1890. Against this back drop, Mugabe argued that land was the primary reason why Zimbabwe's liberation war was fought (*The Daily News*, November 2002). Accordingly, if indigenous Zimbabweans still did not have land, the liberation struggle would not be complete yet. To end it, land taken by European colonist was supposed to be given back to its rightful owners, the indigenous Zimbabweans (Sibanda, 2010).

Understandably, the driving force for the liberation struggle was not only self-rule but the demand for an equitable distribution of resources and most crucially land (Nyatsanza, 2015). In any case, one of the prime reasons that prompted the people of Zimbabwe to stage a protracted war against the British colonisers was obviously the glaring inequality in the ownership of land between the indigenous people and the colonial administrators (Tshuma, 2003). In fact, the land issue was the most pressing and vexing issue which has continued to dog Africans in colonial Zimbabwe (Palmer, 1977), a worry that has persisted to this day.

The attainment of independence in 1980 saw the people of Zimbabwe unanimously rallying behind Mugabe who adopted a socialist ideology as their leader to the newly emerging nation. As one of his avid promises to the newly-born nation, Mugabe made the declaration that he would restore the land back to its rightful owners, the **black** majority (Tshuma, 2003). Jubilantly, and with a lot of promising hope, the nation welcomed the political transition with a lot of enthusiasm which, however, was short-lived (Madzokere, 2017) as the Zimbabwean economy later continued to be dominated by the minority **white** commercial farmers who, besides numbering about 4 000, still controlled one-third of the productive land. Sadly, the majority **black** population was unfortunately and undeservedly

relegated to areas that had poor soil, inadequate rainfall and poor infrastructure (Groves, 2009).

This unfortunate state of affairs was largely influenced and precipitated by clause 16 of the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution which prohibited seizing **white** farms without giving them compensation (Groves, 2009). Precisely, the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution dictated the timeframe and the manner in which land was supposed to be redistributed. Specifically, the Lancaster House Constitution indicated that land could only be acquired 10 years after independence through the willing –seller willing-buyer basis (Dube, 2017).

Britain, in particular, especially under the Conservative Party government, favoured land redistribution based on government purchase of land from willing sellers at full market prices, a bias that contributed to the purchase of scattered, low-quality land for resettlement. Furthermore, the **white** farmers inflated the price of the land, thus making it virtually impossible for the government to sustain funding (*News Click*, 20 November 2017). This policy only allowed the government to acquire land for redistribution only from farmers who were willing to sell. It is important to note that this policy was one of the reasons that led to the continuance of racial inequalities in the distribution of land in post-independence Zimbabwe, particularly within the first 10 years (Mutwira *et al.* 2001).

This obtaining reality obviously put the Mugabe government in a complicated position. The dilemma of the government in dealing with the land issue was exacerbated by the fact that by 1989, Zimbabwe still had no clear policy on land reform (Bratton, 1990). Apart from that, the Land Acquisition Act (1985) noted that all land for sale was to be offered to the state first before it could be offered on the open market (Dube, 2017). More so, the Land Acquisition Act (1992) noted that the government was going to pay only for the improvements on the land based on the evaluation by a government department whose assessment was 800% at tangent with that of the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) (Moyo, 2004).

Most importantly, given the fertile and productive land the **white** farmers had, along with the booming agricultural production, very

few farmers were willing to sell to the government for land redistribution. Understandably, even if they did however, the government had very little financial resources after independence to “buy” the land and other resources needed. Worse still, the British government did not honour its pledge to finance the resettlement process (Maposa *et al.* 2013) as agreed during the historic 1979 Lancaster House Conference. Furthermore, most of the **white** farmers were not prepared to part with their farms (Tshuma, 2003). Therefore, millions of poor indigenous Zimbabweans still remained landless. In view of the aforementioned negative developments, Mugabe’s government did little to correct the past injustices as well as to resolve the disputes and controversies revolving around the land issue.

In light of the above-mentioned factors, Mugabe’s government failed to quickly right the wrongs of the past pertaining to the redistribution of land. Agreeably, the majority of the black Zimbabwean populace living in both rural and urban areas registered their growing displeasure at the slow pace at which the land issue was being addressed in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Compounded by a network of various political blunders and socio-economic factors, the ZANU-PF government failed to constitutionally resolve the land issue (Groves, 2009). In a frantic effort to address the land issue, the then Robert Mugabe government included a land re-distribution clause in the February 2000 referendum. Sadly, the land redistribution exercise was outrightly rejected by the MDC and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) (*Ibid*).

Mugabe and his ZANU-PF government embarked on the controversial and infamous violent land grabs from 2000 (Sibanda, 2010), dubbed the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, to ameliorate its political stature. In fact, they were on the one hand, sandwiched by mounting economic problems and aggressive calls from war veterans and other landless people for land redistribution. On the other hand, the MDC, which had the backing of the CFU, wealthy **white** people as well as thousands of urban dwellers was posing a serious and unprecedented threat to ZANU-PF’s hegemony (Sibanda, 2010). To reclaim its political foothold, the ZANU-PF

government resorted to violence by letting loose the war veterans, supporters and other security agents onto white-owned farms and opposition strongholds (Dube, 2017).

According to Chinamasa (2001: 35), the war veterans under the late Chenjerai Hunzvi effectively became the “military wing of ZANU-PF in the war against commercial farmers and the MDC and anybody with reservations about the move was attacked.” For Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003), the “invasions” were initially fronted by belligerent and militant war veterans and ruling party trained militia and state security forces subsequently joined the cause. This subsequently resulted in legislation which created a framework for what came to be popularly known as “fast track” land reform. It was called fast track because of the swiftness and wide coverage accompanying it. This massive land restitution resulted in small, medium and large scale farms being allocated to ZANU-PF heavyweights, securocrats and supporters (Moyo, 2004; Palmer, 1990). For their part, war veterans were promised 20% of resettlement space despite the fact that they numbered no more than 35 000 out of a Zimbabwean population of 12 million (Guramatunhu, 2014).

The civilians expressed displeasure with the decision in respect of the fact that the war veterans had already been compensated in 1997 when they were each given Z\$50 000 gratuity (Chitiyo, 2000). Unfortunately, the value of the Z\$50 000 cannot be converted into US\$ at the moment. Of the thousands of landless Zimbabweans who invaded these farms, the majority were veterans of the Second *Chimurenga* (Liberation) War (Guramatunhu, 2014). They had fought the war of liberation so as to have their birth right and heritage, the land, restored to them. *Chimurenga* is a Shona term which means a war of liberation. The First *Chimurenga* lasted from 1896 to 1897; the Second *Chimurenga* war from 1965 to 1979; and the so-called Third *Chimurenga*, according to ZANU PF officials, were the land invasions that commenced in 2000 and culminated in the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (Sibanda, 2017).

Mugabe's politicisation of land heritage in Zimbabwe

This section looks at how Robert Mugabe used heritage as a political tool to enable him to cling on to power. It further notes that ZANU-PF used land heritage to revive, reinvigorate and legitimise its political dominance. This is in view of the fact that the land question forms a crucial part of a people's history since all the three *Chimurenga* wars were largely influenced by issues pertaining to land (Sibanda and Maposa, 2014). The attainment of independence in 1980 heralded the triumph of African nationalism as a philosophy and there was unprecedented optimism across all sections of the Zimbabwean population of a just social order characterised by, among other things, social equality; equal access to resources, particularly land; prosperity, and a sustainable economic dispensation for the majority of the citizens (Duri, 2017).

Notably, it also important to highlight that it was the confrontation between Mugabe and the war veterans in 1997 which led to the parcelling out of an unbudgeted Z\$50 000 gratuity per head after they had embarked on a series of protests (Guramatunhu, 2014). This in turn led to the collapse of the Zimbabwean dollar (Dzimiri *et al.* 2014). In order to divert attention from the deteriorating economic lives of urban dwellers, ZANU-PF told the war veterans that their problems could be solved if the land was taken away from white farmers (Sachikonye, 2005). Sensing the growing discontent and impatience among the Zimbabwean citizens' incessant clamouring over the land redistribution issue, and being aware of the stiff political pressure mounting from the opposition MDC and its allies, radicals in ZANU-PF decided to forego all the available constitutional channels and embark on a massive land acquisition exercise (Nyandoro, 2012).

As a result, on 6 February 2000, ZANU-PF embarked on the controversial Land Reform Programme (LRP) that was championed by war veterans (Sibanda, 2010). The government saw it as an opportunity to gain mileage and hence supported it. Critically, this was part of the ruling ZANU-PF party's desperate attempts to restore its waning legitimacy ahead of local government,

parliamentary and presidential elections that were due later during the year (Duri, 2010). To cover up for their past misdeeds and mistakes, ZANU-PF tactfully dangled land in its 2000 election manifesto which was entitled: “Land is the economy and the economy is land” (Moore, 2001). In fact, land became conflated with the economy itself. In a desperate attempt to cling on power, ZANU-PF authorised and sponsored the violent seizure of commercial farms, most of which were white-owned, and redistributed them to blacks (Duri, 2012). Undoubtedly, Zimbabwe’s land reform marked a defining period in Zimbabwe’s history as a nation (Mangeya, 2017).

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) also coincided with the February 2000 Constitutional Referendum which, among other things, ZANU-PF anticipated would authorise the acquisition of land without compensation (Sachikonye, 2005). Lamentably, the final draft Constitution was rejected by the people on the basis that it failed to capture the will of the people but instead allowed Mugabe to continue as President for an additional two terms (Groves, 2009). In a last-minute bid for votes, Mugabe added a clause allowing land seizures by the government without compensation, and demanded that Great Britain, as the former colonial power, provide compensation for the seized land. However, despite these politically calculated moves, the ZANU-PF’s referendum failed on a 57.4% to 45.3% margin, marking the ruling party’s first political defeat since independence and the first popular victory for the MDC (Meredith, 2002). In the words of Alexander (2006: 184-185):

The constitutional referendum of February 2000 marked a watershed in Zimbabwean politics...The referendum defeat marked the moment when it became clear that the ruling party faced a major electoral challenge in the shape of the Movement for Democratic Change...It forced an immediate and dramatic shift in the strategies of ZANU-PF in which veterans and the land took centre stage.

What this entails is that the honeymoon period between 1990 and 2000 that had seen ZANU-PF enjoying political dominance was threatened when the MDC emerged as a forceful political contender

(Dzimiri *et al.* 2014). It is not an overstatement, therefore, to postulate that the FTLRP was master-minded and put in motion by ZANU-PF and used as a tool for political manoeuvre especially, to win back popular support (Ibid). Openly and publicly, the government applauded the land seizures claiming that they were meant to redress the historical colonial land disparities and imbalances (Maposa *et al.* 2013). Sithole and Bretton (2004) point out that ZANU-PF's propaganda that it wanted to return the land to its rightful owners gained acceptance from the older generation who still had memories of the bitter colonial experiences. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009a: 237):

The land question was elevated to a key and only marker of African being. All other aspects of the national liberation struggle, such as the right to vote, democracy, human rights, and equality, were erased from the narrative of the liberation struggle as the land issue became elevated into a singular basis for freedom.

This means that the FTLRP was an orchestrated response to the outcomes of the referendum of 2000, and a panic within ZANU-PF, who saw its support leaching away to a growing opposition (Sachikonye, 2002; Hammar *et al.* 2003). Thus, in 2000, ZANU-PF's political dominance for the past 20 years was seriously challenged for the first time by a new party, the MDC (Alexander, 2006).

Corroborating the aforementioned views, Mlambo (2010) argues that land redistribution in Zimbabwe took a new twist in 2000 when the ruling party was faced with serious political challenges and they had to turn to land for survival. Understood this way, the land redistribution exercise after 2000 was no longer just a matter of redressing colonial injustices but rather a strategy for ZANU-PF to hold on to power (Ibid). Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems (2009) note that: "Land played a central role in the cultural and symbolic politics of the Third *Chimurenga* as both material resource and cultural heritage" (p. 952). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) further argues that when ZANU-PF found itself cornered politically by opposition forces, it found a scapegoat in heritage.

In an effort to make the land a focal point over a woeful economy and human rights, groups of war veterans spearheaded land seizures that culminated in a resettlement exercise based on two models, A1 and A2. A1 resettlement focused on small-scale farms and villagisation similar to that which took place in the late 1980s (Groves, 2009). A2 was intended for medium and large scale farms, specifically those which possessed the greatest resources. While ZANU-PF claimed that Fast-Track resettlement would allow for personal self-sufficiency and the emergence of a cadre of indigenous farmers and black entrepreneurs, the truth remained that land facilitated little more than ZANU-PF's retention of power (*Ibid*). To validate the claim that Mugabe politicised heritage to gain political mileage, his government refused a funded land reform process offered by foreign governments, NGOs, and the United Nations, preferring the violent land grabs in order to thwart political opposition (Chinamasa, 2001).

Arguing from a South African perspective, Manetsi (2017: 222) avers that:

Heritage management has never been an innocent task, but is rather influenced by social and political objectives, as are the technicalities of conservation. The formalisation of heritage management has resulted not only in the institutionalisation of heritage, but also in a form of political currency.

He went further asserting that:

The consistent formations of heritage in each period illustrate the power of heritage to transcend political imagination and become a series of tangible symbols inscribed on the landscape, symbolising and memorialising the regime in power. It for this reason that I have emphasised the fact that heritage is not only about the technicalities of heritage conservation but also about the usefulness of heritage for the state in entrenching and popularising certain dominant political ideas (*Ibid*).

This attest to the reality that heritage is not immune from political manipulation. In line with this, Atkinson (2005) observes that “powerful groups often promote ‘sectarian claims upon the past’ for their own ends.” In this regard, heritage is viewed mainly as a product of state authority and political power (Manetsi 2017). Benavidez’s (2009) analysis of heritage as a mode of state power argues that “the management of heritage discourses of identity is not simply a weapon of ‘the strong’ ... heritage as a strategy of power by which to manage the past and to generate narratives of identity” (p. 112).

In this chapter, it is argued that the violent farm invasions were not meant to address past social injustices as claimed by ZANU-PF. Instead, it was rather a case of predatory elites ensuring a continued hold onto power by all means (Sibanda, 2010). Analysed closely, the government’s loss of popularity enthused the farm invasions in an attempt by the President and the ruling party, ZANU-PF, to avoid a likely defeat in the general elections that were due to be held in June 2000 (Bowyer and Stoneman, 2000). Realising that its support base was dwindling, the government sanctioned farms invasions and embarked on a ‘fast track’ land redistribution programme. The programme followed immediately on the heels of the formation and emergence of an opposition party that had successfully campaigned for the rejection of a government proposed constitution in the referendum of February 2000 (Ibid).

The farm invasions were a crude attempt to deflect attention away from mounting opposition and growing economic problems by finding an easy scapegoat (Palmer, 2000). That is, the government took refuge in drastic measures in order to retain its hold on power (Dansereau and Zamponi, 2005). Thus, a return to the land question was a predictable and ideal strategy to use in trying to win the hearts of the electorate. In a fit of panic, with no more promises to offer to the electorate, the ZANU-PF government hi-jacked the land seizures which was spearheaded by war veterans after noting that the move would benefit them politically. In this regard, the land was subsequently used as a political weapon to appeal to the masses (Sibanda, 2010).

In addition, the timing of the invasions also provides answers to the mystery of why they took place. The invasions took place a few days after the referendum results, in a synchronised fashion (*Ibid*). This was after the ruling party realised its unpopularity and the high likelihood that it was going to be defeated in the impending parliamentary elections due in June (Groves, 2009). Apart from that, the way the process expanded rapidly and unabated showed that it enjoyed considerable logistical support from the government as well as government sponsorship. For instance, the farm invaders were transported in an assortment of government vehicles (Sibanda, 2010).

It is evident that the ‘fast track’ land reform programme in 2000 was not as much about redressing past injustices as it was about the ruling party keeping itself in power in the face of impending electoral defeat (*Ibid*). In fact, it was covert greed on the part of the ruling party - desire by the elites to hold on to power by all means. High ranking government officials, including the late minister of youth, Border Gezi and former Matebeleland governor, Obert Mpofu, were quoted in *The Herald* of June 9, 2000 as saying that ‘only ZANU-PF supporters would be settled on the land acquired.’ This showed clearly the political objective of the whole exercise.

Mugabe and the land reform programme: A self-aggrandisement project

Independence becomes a hollow, meaningless word if any politician abruptly takes the freedoms and rights to property ownership from any Zimbabwean without recourse to the law. How can our most venerated collective heritage — land — be vested in the custody of known pilferers and devious politicians bent on grandiose self-enrichment crusades? (Zimbabwe Independent, 2010: 5).

This section aims to rubbish Mugabe’s claim that the land seizures were primarily meant to reverse colonial injustices perpetrated on the indigenous masses by the Rhodesian government. The truth of the matter is that these claims are falsified by the manner in which the land redistribution exercise was conducted. If the truth is to be told, Mugabe, senior ZANU-PF politicians and cronies and

relatives benefited most by capitalising on their partisan connections to enrich themselves (Duri, 2017). As it turned out to be, a tiny opportunistic group of ZANU-PF officials and their connections owned and controlled much of the productive land in the country (Ibid).

In an attempt to shed more light on this, *The Zimbabwe Independent* (7 January 2010: 4) had this to say: “Ownership of land is now firmly held in the talons of the ZANU-PF politburo, (which) selectively empowers only those indigenous persons parroting its divisive slogans.” Similarly, the *Zimbabwe Online Press*, (21 January 2010: 1) dismissed Mugabe’s claim that the Fast Track Land Reform Programme was an attempt to give the majority of indigenous Zimbabweans their rightful inheritance: “Even though Mugabe has consistently maintained that his land reform programme is meant to benefit the poor indigenous masses, it is him and his cronies who have got the most out of it.”

To add insult to injury, Mugabe preached the false gospel of one person, one farm. Emerging narratives indicate that while Mugabe hid behind the facade that he was a pro-people leader, he was busy amassing wealth, accumulating a total of 21 farms during his 37-year rule stint (Ibid). Out of the 21 farms, 5 are in Mazowe and Norton respectively. Mugabe farms located in Mazowe include Gushungo Diaries (1000ha), Iron Mask Farm (1046ha), Sigaru Farm (873ha), Liverdale Farm (1488ha) and Bassiville Farm (1200ha) (Tevera, 2015). The other farms located in Norton include Highfield Farm (445ha), Cressydale Farm (676ha), Tankatara Farm (575ha), Clifford Farm (1050ha) and John O’ Groat Farm (760ha) (Ibid). Typical of Mobutu’s ‘Zairenisation’ edicts in the Congo during 1973 and 1974 (Young, 2004), high ranking politicians parcelled out large tracts of land to their cronies and reserved for themselves, the largest and most fertile ones. As reported by *Zimbabwe Online Press* (21 January 2010: 1), government documents and audit reports showed that the biggest beneficiaries of land reform were “ZANU-PF members and supporters, security service chiefs and officers, and traditional chiefs who have openly sided with Mugabe and senior government officials and judges.”

Preferential treatment for the ZANU-PF elite in the allocation of land was rampant, resulting in discontentment even among the ordinary supporters of the party (Duri, 2017). In February 2001, some newly-resettled farmers alleged that senior ZANU-PF politicians and war veterans, as well as high-ranking civil servants, were being given land with better facilities such as farmhouses (Alexander, 2003 cited in Duri, 2017). In 2004, for instance, Amnesty International noted that there was corruption in the redistribution of land resulting in the best commercial farmlands being given to influential political cronies while the relatively poor land was issued to small scale farmers (Amnesty International, February 2004 cited in Duri, 2017; Tevera, 2015).

In July 2012, it was reported that President Mugabe, top ZANU-PF politicians, senior government officials, high ranking-military personnel and judges had benefited the most with 5 million hectares of land among them (Duri, 2017; Tevera, 2015). About 2 200 politically-connected elite Zimbabweans owned more than 50% of the most fertile land seized from white commercial farmers (*Zimbabwe Online Press*, 16 July 2012, cited in Duri, 2017). Multiple farm ownership also characterised the predatory instincts and extreme self-aggrandisement on the part of the political elite (Duri, 2017).

In 2005, the Ministry of Lands ordered senior government officials to adhere the One-Person-One-Farm Policy and give up extra farms without success (Duri, 2017). Apart from that, a committee appointed to investigate multiple farm ownership noted that 13 cabinet ministers and four provincial governors had more than one farm (Phiri, 2006, cited in Duri, 2017). In 2012, President Mugabe and his wife, Grace, were reportedly owning 14 farms, about 16 000 hectares in extent. The then first Vice President, Joyce Mujuru, and her late husband, together with their relatives, were alleged to be in possession of more than 25 farms with a combined area of 105 000 hectares (Duri, 2017). Mugabe and his supporters in government were the main personal beneficiaries of the land reform programme, contrary to claims that the programme was designed to afford equal opportunities to land.

Conclusion

This chapter has validated the claim that Robert Mugabe succeeded in using heritage as both a political resource and a propaganda vehicle to outmanoeuvre the opposition as well as to legitimise his continued firm grip on state power. Due to the multifaceted and contentious nature of heritage, it is more often than not used by politicians as a reference and rallying point for hoodwinking the disgruntled and disillusioned electorate. Besides, the chapter has also shown that the Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF government tactfully and strategically turned to heritage in the form of land at an opportune moment to ward off the formidable political opposition of the MDC as well as to extend his political lifespan. The appeal to heritage appears to be the only way Mugabe could regain a strong foothold on his dwindling and waning political base in both the urban and rural areas which was seriously challenged by the Morgan Tsvangirai-led MDC. Thus, the speedy and violent confiscation of mostly white-owned commercial farms enabled Mugabe to at least survive the impending political doom.

Hiding behind the fallacious rhetoric of righting the wrongs of the past through returning back the heritage to its rightful owners, Mugabe and his political cronies seized the opportunity to further enrich themselves by appropriating multiple farms in the most productive areas with developed infrastructure. It is obviously apparent that Mugabe employed nefarious tactics to garner support from the electorate as well as to rekindle the revolutionary spirit in the minds of the disgruntled war veterans who were also considering relinquishing their loyal support for Mugabe. As a way of ensuring that heritage plays a critical role in Zimbabwean politics, he made sure that all key heritage institutions were all brought under the ambit of the state.

This chapter is cognisant of the partisan uses to which the past is put, in which some political figures and parties use heritage as a convenient and easy political ladder to power. The chapter, particularly acknowledges the various ways in which heritage is purposefully manipulated by those in power to outcompete their

rivals during political campaigns. Thus, heritage can be used to legitimise certain ideological goals as well being utilised as a source of inspiration and a symbol of legitimacy. Infused with ideological significance, heritage has become an area of political contestations in Zimbabwe. Beyond politics and patriotic discourses, heritage also become a demi-god for keeping ZANU-PF in power for more than three decades at the expense of the majority of Zimbabweans who, besides languishing in abject poverty, never benefited from the land heritage. This politicisation of heritage severely threatened the economic and political stability of the country. This arbitrary and stylistic manipulation of heritage, especially when solely done to cover up for known previous misdeeds and failures, can sometimes be taken to extremes which will obviously impact negatively on the general populace as was the case in Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe.

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From Being a Man of the People to a Senile Captive Dictator? Capturing the Different Personalities of Robert Mugabe through Play and History

Genius Tevera & Golden Maunganidze

Introduction

This chapter explores the different personalities assumed by Robert Mugabe during his tenure in office. It examines how he transitioned from being a ‘people’s person’ to being a senile captive dictator under the influence of a young, over-ambitious wife. It does so using a combination of history and a theatrical play titled ‘Operation Restore Regasi’ staged at the Charles Austin Theatre in the Zimbabwean city of Masvingo. The naming of the play itself is fascinating in the sense that the artists managed to coin a new term, ‘Regasi,’ as they imitated Constantino Chiwenga, the former Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), who failed to pronounce the term ‘Legacy’ properly throughout all his speeches during the military intervention he spearheaded in November 2017, code-named ‘Operation Restore Legacy,’ that forced Mugabe to resign (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017; Ndebele, 17 November 2017). During his speeches, Chiwenga always pronounced the letter ‘l’ as ‘r’, hence ‘Regasi’ instead of ‘Legacy.’

In Zimbabwe, it was unthinkable in the past for artists to mock senior politicians such as Mugabe and securocrats like Chiwenga, the former commander of ZDF who became the country’s Vice President after Mnangagwa succeeded Mugabe in November 2017 (Melber, 14 December 2017). For the period of 37 years that Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe, it was almost a taboo to openly criticise him especially if you belonged to his Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party. Those who tried to criticise him were either demoted or fired from the party and in the process,

Mugabe became one of the most feared people in the country during his reign (Masekesa, 8 February 2015). State-run media entities such as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and Zimpapers publications, together with many ZANU-PF officials deified Mugabe and virtually elevated him to a divine status. Even when Mugabe turned 93 years in 2017, the very year he was ousted, several senior ZANU-PF politicians and government ministers continued to lobby for the nonagenarian to remain in power for as long as he wished (Tshuma, 21 February 2017).

These developments gave Mugabe multiple identities as some people adored him while others viewed him as a monster that had destroyed Zimbabwe, a country which was once a jewel of Africa. These multiple identities were quite manifest in Zimbabwe's polarised media coverage in which the state-owned press eulogised him while the independent media generally regarded him as a villain, a scenario that confused many ordinary Zimbabweans across the political divide. What further confused many Zimbabweans was that when the ZDF launched a *coup* in November 2017, at a time when the country was besieged by socio-economic hardships which included chronic unemployment and abject poverty, the army exonerated Mugabe and argued that they were only targeting criminal elements around him whom they accused of corruption and misleading the President. In other words, the ZDF argued that the operation was meant to weed out criminals in government and in the process, restore the legacy of the former President, Robert Mugabe as a liberator and an honest leader, hence the code-named operation, 'Operation Restore Legacy.'

The play 'Operation Restore Regasi' exposes Mugabe's many faces since 1980: from being a man of the people, to a feared dictator, and finally to a senile captive of circumstances who, possibly, deserved sympathy if people had had an opportunity to see what was happening to him behind the scenes. The play is also critical of the army's involvement in civilian politics. It indirectly attacks the Zimbabwean military for preaching constitutionalism on one hand, and torturing Mugabe's allies behind the scenes on the other hand. At the end of it all, the play succeeds in showing that there was no

legacy to talk about with regards to Mugabe. The role played by theatre performance is therefore critical as it affords voice to the could be voiceless.

This role of theatre performance echoes with Vambe's (2004) observation that many performing arts in Zimbabwe have always been political. Theatre plays have been used to articulate socio-political issues in the past and more-so within the contemporary discourse. Historical examples that prove theatre's importance within the political discourse are plays that were used for political orientation of the masses during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. One such example is a play by students in one of the liberation camp during the struggle titled 'The people are invincible', which, reading from its title, seems to have been targeted at strengthening the resolve of the freedom fighters and collaborators to continue fighting (Chinyowa 2010). Chinyowa (2010: 2) refers to '*pungwe* theatre', which were all-night rallies characterised by singing, dancing and propaganda speeches, as a form of political theatre which was meant to "mobilise black African people and promote mental decolonisation." (Kaarsholm, 1994: 226). Chifunyise (1994: 55) describes *pungwe* in the same terms as Chinyowa by noting that it was "an all-night song-dance-political rally...which became the medium for the dramatisation of the people's struggle".

In post-independent Zimbabwe, theatre performances such as songs, dance and plays, among others, have continued to address socio-political issues. A good example is Habakuk Musengezi's 'The Honourable MP'. The play criticises politicians in independent Zimbabwe who advocated for socialism while depending for their survival on capitalist economic infrastructure (Chifunyise, 1994). The play is confrontational in the way it criticises the government's methods of running the country. The play clearly prove the role of theatre in empowering people to deal with critical issues.

Political theatre has had many protagonists in Zimbabwe but top among them is the Harare-based Rooftop Promotions which uses the popular venue 'Theatre in the Park'. Theatre in the Park has hosted politically-oriented plays such as 'Heal the Wounds' and 'Waiting for

Constitution’ by Stephen Chifunyise. The play ‘Operation Restore Regasi’ has also been hosted several times at ‘Theatre in the Park’.

That said, this chapter focuses on how ‘Operation Restore Regasi’ has helped Zimbabweans to understand the multifaceted and inconsistent nature of the country’s former President, Robert Mugabe. The people of Zimbabwe lived with Mugabe as their leader and President for 37 years but many of them had almost failed to understand him and as a result there was confusion as some thought that the former President’s so-called legacy needed to be protected while the alleged “criminals” around him were to be prosecuted. However, this chapter unpacks what an ordinary Zimbabwean needed to know about Robert Mugabe. Although many were convinced that Robert Mugabe had a sound legacy that needed to be guarded jealously, the play exposes Mugabe as a dictator who was determined to remain in power at whatever cost.

Understanding Robert Mugabe

In public places such as beer halls, the mere mention of Robert Mugabe’s name during his tenure as Zimbabwean President could make grown-up men and women shiver, fearing the unknown. His life was that of a sacred myth which no other “common” person could criticise in public and at the same time being allowed to go away with it (Kamhungira, 18 March 2010). Ordinary Zimbabweans were afraid of Mugabe to the extent that they even feared discussing politics in public. He was a god in his own right, with his own ‘Ten Commandments’ which he used to bring ‘his people’ to order. Anyone who dared to defy his rule or threatened the pillars that held together his power would be imprisoned, abducted, exiled, tortured or even killed by the state security agents who were often accused of protecting Mugabe’s interests at the expense of the nation (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 27 November 2017).

Robert Mugabe rose to power during the liberation struggle largely due to his intellectual capacity, tact and deception. Having trained as a teacher and lawyer, he was able to manipulate nationalists and freedom fighters into voting for him to become the First

Secretary of ZANU, later ZANU-PF, in 1977. His fluency was second to none and his charisma won him even the hearts of his antagonists during his rise to power (Meredith, 2007).

His early days in power after Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 can be summed up as the fulfilment of an African dream. Zimbabwe was the bread basket of Africa and its currency could buy in any part of the world (*BBC News*, 22 November 2017). To the Queen of England, Mugabe was an admirable character who deserved to be knighted and addressed as Sir Robert Mugabe (*Huffington Post*, 23 November 2017). In the early days of his rule, Mugabe was the great liberator, who ended colonial rule and pioneered black independence. That was his legacy until he overstayed in power and literally destroyed the whole country just to remain as not only the President but the Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, Chancellor of all State Universities and First Secretary of ZANU- PF (*Global*, 15 November 2017). He was determined to carry all these titles to the grave and was probably confident that Zimbabwe would be buried alongside him at the National Heroes' Acre.

Mugabe gradually reduced himself into a shameless dictator who would literally steal the elections. In all general elections since 2000, he declared himself the winner amid accusations of political violence and massive rigging. Protests from opposition political parties and the international community always fell on deaf ears (*Newsday*, 17 November 2014). In 2008 for example, because of state oppression in Zimbabwe, Queen Elizabeth revoked the honour of knighthood she had previously bestowed upon Mugabe (Porter, 25 June 2008), but the latter remained defiant.

Besides oppression, Mugabe's rule increasingly became associated with corruption and self-aggrandisement while many Zimbabweans wallowed in poverty. The First Family was alleged to have abused state resources to set up a business empire within the country and abroad (Swain and Sheridan, 15 February 2009; Thornycroft, 19 December 2016). Senior ZANU-PF and government officials also followed suit in corruption, looting state resources such as diamonds, and grabbing farms, among other things

(Duri, 2017; *Zimbabwe Online Press*, 16 July 2012). Many ZANU-PF youths also joined the gravy train and became notorious for using the party's name to secure bank loans which they later refused to pay back (*Daily News Live*, 23 March 2014).

Worse still, some of Mugabe's family members and relatives gradually assumed entitlement in the running of the state. Grace, his wife, a mere typist by profession, for example, dreamt of succeeding her husband and becoming the second Executive President of the Republic. Addressing multitudes of ZANU-PF supporters at a rally in early November 2016, for example, the then First Lady openly declared that she had assumed all the Presidential powers and was planning everything her husband was implementing (*News24*, 11 November 2016). One year down the line, in November 2017, Grace told ruling party supporters at a rally in Harare that she can become Zimbabwe's next President (*Bloomberg News*, 6 November 2017). She went on to inform ZANU-PF supporters that she was pressuring her husband to fire the then Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa from the party (*Ibid*). It was not surprising, therefore, that Mugabe fired Mnangagwa from ZANU-PF and government a day after Grace's rally (*Ibid*). These developments illuminate a dispensation of state capture by the First Family and in particular the First lady. Thus, the more Mugabe stayed in power, the more he discredited his legacy as a liberator and level-headed leader.

While doing all this, Mugabe was living in a false world. Those around him gave him the false impression that many Zimbabweans still supported him. He did not know that his allies had created for him a closed superficial enclave made of ice while temperatures in the outside world were rising. Mugabe's biggest mistake was to overstay in power to such an extent that he became a threat to those who had ushered him to that post. By overstaying in power, Mugabe frustrated many potential investors, particularly from the outside world, who wished to plan business for the future with fresh minds and not with a nonagenarian flanked by corrupt cronies.

Mugabe's multiple faces

Muponde (2015) argues that there is no one way of defining or finding meaning to the being of Robert Mugabe both as a person and as a national leader. However, it is imperative to explore the different faces or identities that Mugabe assumed as Zimbabwe's Head of State for 37 years from 1980 to 2017 in order to understand the irony of the events of November 2017 which led to his ouster from power. We acknowledge, however, that this is not an easy task as over the years, people constructed, reconstructed and deconstructed a cache of identities of Mugabe based on their interpretations of various experiences they had during his rule. His persona and identity are now highly interwoven into the history, fortunes and misfortunes of Zimbabwe. It is important to note that in some instances, Mugabe wore multiple faces at the same time where he was variously understood by different people. These identities have ranged from being viewed as an ambitious and ruthless figure bent on clinging to power at whatever cost, to being an African hero who fought against colonialism and neo-colonialism (Raftopoulos and Phimister, 2004).

To understand Mugabe as a person, one has to understand the history and internal dynamics of the ZANU-PF party. ZANU-PF's identity as a political party has been built around the *Chimurenga* (liberation war in the local Shona language) and its victory over the Western colonisers in general and the Rhodesian colonial regime of Ian Smith in particular. This section examines how Zimbabwe's liberation war was used to bestow a hero status upon Mugabe, but more importantly, explores the ways in which this identity has mutated over time.

The *Chimurenga* monologue: Mugabe the liberator

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003; 2005) argues that, in a bid to evoke a sense of unity and legitimacy, Zimbabwe has seen a constant appeal to the memory of *Chimurenga*. The term *Chimurenga* became popular in Zimbabwe during the 1970s as a vernacular name for the armed struggle against colonial rule (*Ibid*). After independence, the term has

gained new dimensions, often being used, among other things, to capture the spirit of Black empowerment struggles that started with the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme from 2000 that was famously dubbed the ‘Third *Chimurenga*’ by Robert Mugabe. Ndlovu-Gauthseni (2005) argues that the liberation war became central in ZANU-PF narratives about Zimbabwean nationhood and heritage. From the 1990s, however, these narratives have come under increasing historical scrutiny (*Ibid*).

In constructing its identity as the liberation movement that brought about Zimbabwean independence, ZANU-PF also idolised Robert Mugabe and portrayed him as a true radical and symbol of revolutionary courage and resistance against colonialism. Mugabe, with the help of ZANU-PF, created for himself the identity of *indoda sibili* (a real man in the local Ndebele language) within the liberation struggle as well as a ‘true son of the soil’. He worked hard to make his liberation war credentials unquestionable so much so that he embodied the core ideals of a liberated state and a revolutionary party that knew what people wanted, and upon whom the burden to fulfil the people’s needs rested (Mugabe, 1978). During his inauguration speech at independence in 1980, Mugabe promised to be a people-centred leader. He preached reconciliation, a message which earned him international praise and raised the optimism of many Zimbabweans with hope. But as time went by, and Mugabe’s rule turned authoritarian while the economy declined, that hope waned.

Soon after independence many Zimbabweans viewed Mugabe as an iconic person who spoke and stood against the forces of oppression. His electoral campaigns since 1980 were almost always centred on a combination of liberation heritage and history and the anti-Western rhetoric. Thus, in the eyes of the general public, Mugabe was the brave hero who was able to tell Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, to ‘keep his England’ so that he ‘keeps his Zimbabwe’ (Mugabe, 2005).

The architecture of the National Heroes’ Acre shows a lot about how the ZANU-PF government lionised Mugabe. Its walls are engraved with Mugabe’s figure as the leading visionary and strategist, with his followers in the background (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009a).

This, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009a), marked the beginning of the canonisation and institutionalisation of Mugabe as an overarching leader. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009b), these were part of the origins of Mugabeism, a political situation in which Mugabe ceased to be just a person but a system. Over the years, being Mugabe and being ZANU-PF became synonymous so much so that one could not imagine a Mugabe-less ZANU-PF and by extension, a Mugabe-less Zimbabwe. Within ZANU-PF, according to Moore (2006), Mugabe managed to entrench the impression that he was irreplaceable both as a party and national leader. Consequently, his identity became intertwined with that of the party and that of the nation. Zimbabwe was rebranded into being Mugabe's Zimbabwe, the ruling party into Mugabe's ZANU-PF and Zimbabweans as Mugabe's people. As David Coltart, during an interview with Robert Forsyth (2017), noted:

...ZANU-PF has invested an enormous amount in the Mugabe brand and when he goes—whether he dies, or retires, or becomes incapacitated—it's going to shake ZANU. He's the glue that holds it together. So even though there is intense competition taking place over who will succeed him, the one thing they are agreed on is that he should remain in power for as long as possible. And the military supports that as well.

Mugabe embodied the role of being a 'father of the nation.' To many ZANU-PF sycophants, he had the title deeds of Zimbabwe. This became evident when, as earlier mentioned in this chapter, Mugabe told Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, to 'keep your England and I keep my Zimbabwe'. It was in this context that some prominent ZANU-PF figures jostled to hero-worship Mugabe and elevate him to superhuman status. Obert Mpofu, ZANU-PF's Secretary of Finance and Cabinet Minister, for example, proclaimed himself as Mugabe's 'ever obedient son' (*Nehanda Radio*, 12 November 2010). A similar quest to be Mugabe's son is made by Webster Shamu, another senior ZANU-PF official, when he said: "If I had been given the option to choose my father before birth, where

would I have gone? ...I would have been number one at First House, at President Mugabe's house. I would have said that's where I want to be born" (*Daily News Live*, 1 May 2013). During a rally on 30 August 2017, Kudzai Chipanga, the then ZANU-PF Secretary for Youth Affairs, reiterated: "We have no other father or mother that we know of....I am the first born child of President Robert Mugabe...all other men are our uncles because President Mugabe is the only father" (*News24*, 30 August 2017). It can, therefore, be noted that many ZANU-PF officials like Chipanga went to extremely bizarre lengths of disowning their own biological parents and bestowing fatherhood exclusively on Mugabe.

Many other titles and identities were bestowed upon Mugabe by ZANU-PF praise-singers. Webster Shamu once likened him to Cremora (a brand of creamy powdered milk) (*Newsday*, 2 March 2011). Several other ZANU-PF officials equated him to Jesus Christ (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 29 December 2013; Mhlanga, 18 February 2013); Mushava, 31 December 2015; Nyathi, 5 June 2014; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 5 August 2016), a messiah (Zulu, 2 December 2014), a saint and an angel (Manayiti and Saunyama, 3 June 2017). This is clear evidence that Mugabe was idolised and elevated to divine status by many of his cronies.

Mugabe the dictator

When Mugabe took office in 1980, there was a lot of hope that he was going to be a people-centred leader but as time passed, he became authoritarian and some of the voices that used to praise him disappeared (Raftopolous, 2004). Mugabe became obsessed and preoccupied with a Machiavellian style of leadership such that with time, he became a liberator-turned-tyrant (Hartwell, 2014), what Ayittey (1998: 7, 221, 278) terms "crocodile liberator," implying one who devours someone whom he or she has rescued.

Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe in an authoritarian manner as he sought to maintain his firm grip on power. One of the earliest brutal acts committed by his government was the Gukurahundi massacre of 1982-1984 during which up to 20 000 civilians, mostly from the

Ndebele ethnic group in the provinces of Matabeleland and the Midlands, were reportedly killed as the ZANU-PF government accused them of supporting dissidents allegedly aligned to the opposition Zimbabwe African People's Union (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger, 2000; Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation, 1997). The government defended itself by arguing that it was primarily concerned with eliminating dissidents and that civilians who were killed had been caught up in crossfire (Eppel, 2004). The Gukurahundi pogrom exposed Mugabe's villainy of sacrificing up to 20 000 lives for the sake of power.

Over the years, particularly from 2000, he reportedly rigged the national elections to ensure that the MDC, the biggest opposition party, most of whose leaders had no liberation war credentials, would not rule the country. In 2003, the British press even compared him to Hitler after accusing him of rigging the 2002 elections, to which he responded: "I am still the Hitler of the time. This Hitler has only one objective, justice for his own people and their right to their resources. If that is Hitler, then let me be a Hitler tenfold...." (Hentoff, 2012: 7).

Mugabe lost the first round of presidential elections in March 2008 to Morgan Tsvangirai, the opposition MDC leader, but the long-time dictator would not cede power (*The Guardian*, 2 April 2008). Instead he launched a campaign of violence during which those who were thought to support the opposition were beaten up, harassed and in some instances killed (*The Guardian*, 22 June 2008). In addition, Mugabe vowed never to cede power:

You can vote for them [MDC], but that would be a wasted vote. I am telling you. You would just be cheating yourself. There is no way we can allow them to rule this country. Never, ever. We have a job to do, to protect our heritage. The MDC will not rule this country. It will never, ever happen. We will never allow it (quoted by Solidarity Peace Trust, 2008:12).

Thus, Mugabe displayed the typical characteristics of an egocentric despot who does not accept criticism or defeat. He considered himself as the god-father of Zimbabwe and bestowed upon himself the right to decide and dictate on the nation's behalf.

Goredema (2004) argues that Mugabe's long term in office and his undying belief in self-righteousness largely explains why he ended up interfering with the independence of the judiciary. He considered himself not only to be above the law but also a law unto himself. He overruled court decisions by signing decrees under the Presidential Powers Act and according to Meredith (2007), he even threatened to remove judges who had ruled against his interests. Villan (2013) argues that, even most constitutional reforms that were made in Zimbabwe were meant to safeguard Mugabe's hold on power rather than to protect the rights of the people.

By 2013, an adamant Mugabe would not acknowledge that many Zimbabweans were discontented by bad governance and worsening socio-economic hardships such as spiralling unemployment, food insecurity and chronic poverty. During an interview with Dali Tambo, a South African journalist, in 2013, Mugabe arrogantly said: "My people still need me. And when people still need you to lead them, it's not time ... to say goodbye." (*News24*, 26 May 2013). These arrogant sentiments clearly cast Mugabe as an insensitive dictator who was determined to stay in power against all odds, despite the cost to the nation and the people he so dearly purported to love.

Mockery of Mugabe: Understanding the last moments of a dictator through 'Operation Restore Regasi'

On the 14th of November 2017, there was a political development in Zimbabwe which ultimately led to the resignation of Robert Mugabe on the 21st of the same month. The events, which were led by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, were code-named Operation Restore Legacy during which the army intervened in civilian politics, claiming that Mugabe's legacy had been compromised by a ZANU-PF faction of Young Turks, popularly known as Generation 40 (G40), referring to young politicians of

around 40 years of age (*Herald*, 11 December 2017). The military intervention took place immediately after the then Vice President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who reportedly led the rival Lacoste faction, was fired by President Mugabe whose young wife, Grace, was believed to be the G40 leader (*Mail Online*, 15 November 2017). Although the events were seemingly peaceful, the people in Zimbabwe were wondering about what was really taking place at the Blue Roof, Mugabe's official residence. The events unfolded very fast to an extent that Zimbabweans were almost witnessing new developments on an hourly basis. This triggered more public anxiety up to this day about what exactly transpired at the Blue Roof that forced the dictator of 37 years to resign.

According to Charles Munganasa (Interview, 18 March 2018), an award-winning play-writer and artistic director with the Charles Austin Theatre in Masvingo, there was no other way of coming closer to what was happening during the Operation Restore Legacy from 13 to 21 November 2017 other than coming up with a daring play also dubbed 'Operation Restore Regasi.' While most of the lines performed by the actors were imagined, the chronology of events closely resembled what happened during the particular period.

'Operation Restore Regasi' is perhaps one of the most controversial plays in the history of Zimbabwe. This is largely due to the fact that it addresses a highly sensitive political topic which is very classified and regarded as dangerous in Zimbabwe. The play interrogates, reconstructs and documents events leading to Robert Mugabe's downfall with particular focus on his history and character. The play allows the audience to have a relook at Mugabe's history without fearing that someone would spy on them as was the norm during his rule.

According to Munganasa (Interview, 18 March 2018), the play writer, 'Operation Restore Regasi' was composed to serve three purposes namely, documenting Mugabe's history, helping Zimbabweans to interrogate the life lived by Mugabe so that they are able to audit his lifestyle, as well as to allow the people to reconstruct reality. He elaborated as follows:

It is important to note that theatre mirrors society and as such, it plays the role of recording events and re-telling them. This form of theatre can be termed “Documentary theatre”. Robert Mugabe had been in power for 37 years and eventually his end was bound to make international headlines and become good content for good story tellers. Within the 37 years, Mugabe did so many things which on their own can provide great material for an award-winning script. Ranging from Gukurahundi, land reform, Murambatsvina, 2008 election violence to ZANU-PF factionalism, Mugabe provided a stencil which can even make an amateur writer look like Shakespeare. Whilst most of these stories have been told before in various platforms, writers and performers have not been so free to tell this Mugabe story due to the massive censorship that Mugabe had put in place. Any material regarded to be anti-Mugabe would be banned in Zimbabwe, whilst anything deemed to be insulting the former President would be an automatic death sentence for the writer. So the idea was to document a historical event without fear and without favour (*Ibid*).

Indeed, the play captures all the ‘moments of madness’ by Mugabe and allows the people to laugh at the things they hated him for. Through this theatrical performance, Mugabe’s other identities are also revealed. To this end, the actors also dramatise Mugabe as a husband, father and the spiritual being. In as much as he was the most feared man outside the Blue Roof residence, the play exposes Mugabe’s private life as a humble husband. While outside his normal daily work at the State House, the play reveals Mugabe as a victim in the Blue Roof where Grace, his wife, subjected him to various forms of abuse.

The play also discloses that, inasmuch as Mugabe would have wanted to resign due to his old age, as evidenced by his falling into a deep slumber anytime even during crucial meetings as a result of advanced age, he could not do so because his wife, who was 40 years younger than him, still wanted to enjoy the material benefits of being the First Lady. According to the play, it was Grace who was behind the firing of senior ZANU-PF officials such as the former Vice Presidents, Joyce Mujuru in 2014 and Emmerson Mnangagwa in

2017. At some point in the play, Mugabe reveals that he was not aware that Mnangagwa had been fired from the party. After the firing of Mnangagwa, the play shows Grace rehearsing how she was going to tackle Constantino Chiwenga, the ZDF commander, whom she felt was the remaining major threat to her ambition to succeed Robert Mugabe. Thus, the play, through imaginary works by the actors, takes the audience through uncharted territory, that is, restricted places where classified information is stored. As Munganasa (Interview, 18 March 2018) noted:

A lot of people are still wondering and imagining what really took place during the November events? Whilst some of the events were broadcasted on state television, most of the important moments still remain a mystery known by a few. A lot of questions have gone unanswered, for example: At what point did Mugabe lose control of his own security? Who actually broke the news to the President that the military was taking over? Where was Grace Mugabe all that time and what really happened during the night he said, “Asante Sana” when everyone expected him to resign? As such, through creative imagination and with the assistance of some insights, the play reconstructs the events and portrays an account of what could have happened during that time. Though not completely accurate, the play traces the events as they happened throughout.

The play even visits Mugabe’s bedroom and mocks him for failing to fulfil his conjugal duties due to advanced age. However, one still can forgive Mugabe for hanging on to power due to forces beyond his control. In the end, Mugabe is portrayed as a mere victim of circumstances.

Interestingly, the play does not exonerate the army itself for overthrowing Mugabe. Through some scenes, the play criticises the army for venturing into politics, thereby violating the very same constitution that it purported to protect. Behind the scenes, the play demonstrates that the army was irked by the Mugabe’s firing of Mnangagwa from ZANU-PF and the possibility of Grace’s ascendancy to the helm of the party. The play insinuates that General

Chiwenga, as the most senior member of the army who reported directly to Mugabe on daily basis, should have realised that Mugabe was senile long back. However, as the play suggests, Chiwenga, like many other senior ZANU-PF officials, were benefiting through 'capturing' Mugabe but then realised that Grace had successfully outwitted them. They therefore orchestrated a plan of 'restoring the legacy' of Mugabe that never was.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted, with the help of history and play, to chronicle the different identities assumed by Robert Mugabe during his tenure in office up to the end. The chapter exposes Mugabe's multi-faceted character during his almost four decades rule from 1980 to 2017. Some aspects of his character dramatised in the play 'Operation Restore Regasi' include his being a man of the people immediately after independence and a feared dictator thereafter. In the end, the play portrays Mugabe as a senile and 'captured' victim of circumstances who deserved sympathy if Zimbabweans had an opportunity to see what was happening behind the scenes.

Up to his final days in power, Robert Mugabe was never understood by many even in his political party ZANU-PF. Mugabe had become a small 'god' who could never be questioned on whatever he would do. Political activists and politicians within ZANU-PF had reached a level when they thought it would be 'evil' to question Mugabe on anything - a man whom they widely believed that was coming from God. However, the play 'Operation Restore Regasi' exposed Mugabe's true colours of a man who stayed in power for too long to the extent that he would confuse the country with his personal property. Although he never believed that he was no longer popular, Mugabe and his family took long to understand that they had overstayed their welcome. The play, therefore, plays a pivotal role in become the mirror of the society and helping society understand and better articulate the events which led to the oust of its former president.

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Robert Mugabe Government Disenfranchised the Zimbabwean Majority

Munyaradzi Mawere & Costain Tandi

Introduction

This chapter examines how the Robert Mugabe government's political and economic policies deprived and impoverished the Zimbabwean majority. Robert Mugabe's disastrous leadership of Zimbabwe has raised acrimonious debate in both political and academic circles. The descent into the morass of failure and "political toxification" seem relentless for Zimbabwe which was regarded as the bread basket of Southern Africa in the aftermath of its independence in 1980.

Interestingly, Zimbabwe inherited a relatively stable and promising economy. The country had a thriving agricultural sector and an auspicious manufacturing industry that contributed 25% to national gross domestic product (GDP). The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), led by Robert Mugabe, inherited a successful but repressive 'cohesive capitalist state' in 1980 from a "white" colonial government that had enforced its control through racially exclusive institutions that denied Africans most political and economic rights (Bond & Manyanya 2002). During their tenure, the European capitalists had monopolised most of the fertile land as well as all large commercial, industrial and financial companies. Besides, economic growth had averaged 6-7 percent but in favour of the settlers' minority. This was accompanied by rapid industrialisation and mechanised farming which created a sophisticated economy on the continent after South Africa.

At independence in 1980, the Robert Mugabe's new "democratic government" had to incorporate an African population made up of two major ethnic groups, most of whom lived on mainly subsistence

communal farms, but also included a semi-proletarianised rural and urban working class. Stoneman & Cliffe (1989) note that it managed to sustain a viable balance between political compliance, administrative capacity and economic growth from 1980 to the late 1990s because ZANU-PF established itself as the primary representative of the political interests of the Zimbabweans. The Mugabe regime again renounced its 'left' Marxist ideology to persuade key officials and most of the capitalist class to remain and provide the skills and capital on which economic productivity depended. It was therefore able to retain majority support, neutralise its potential opponents, maintain administrative capacity and deliver high quality services, and expand its tax base until the late 1990s. It first used corporatist, then liberal, economic policies, but the stresses that they generated eventually threatened this consensus and led to populist policies that cut output and produced a series of vicious circles that turned Zimbabwe from a relatively successful state to a crisis state in serious danger of collapse.

Thus, some decades later, the Zimbabwean Government under the autocratic leadership of former President, Robert Mugabe had not only survived political turmoil but also a deepening economic crisis. Mugabe's government caused much suffering and poverty to its citizens. Interestingly, Mugabe's leadership of Zimbabwe for over three decades illustrates how ineffective leadership can result in poor use of resources and waste, both economic and social, and how it ultimately breeds sub-optimal end-results. Mugabe shows us how an autocratic leader can have a solid grip on his people, even if that entails exploiting the infrastructure at his disposal to create socio-economic hardships for his subjects.

That noted, this chapter is bent to interrogate the political and economic experiences of the Republic of Zimbabwe during the reign of Mugabe, from April 1980 to November 2017. The chapter argues that one of the main sociological problems in Zimbabwe under Mugabe was poor governance as each of the factors that restricted the country from developing was a direct consequence of poor public policies and corruption. On this note, the demonstrates how, under the reign of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabweans were subjected to gross

violations of property rights, including state-sponsored land expropriation and vandalism, restrictive business regulations, and an abysmal monetary policy. This was worsened by corruption, mismanagement and disruptive and inconsistent economic policies that created fertile ground for poverty, inequality and economic decline as well as dependence on the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for financial support and policy guidance. What is instructive to note is that any one of these would be detrimental to an economy, but all of them combined kept the Zimbabwean people in poverty and have inhibited their capacity from undergoing much-needed development.

Corruption and impoverishment of the Zimbabwean masses

Though Zimbabwe attained its independence more than three decades ago, minimal progress have been made, at least economically. While this limited progress can be attributed to a number of problems haunting the country and the African continent at large, a multitude of public scandals such as corruption by Mugabe and his cronies help to explain why the Zimbabweans were impoverished and eventually sank into poverty. Generally speaking, corruption is a form of dishonesty undertaken by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit (Black's Law Dictionary, n.d.). It is misuse of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International, 2006). As noted by Kaufmann and Pedro (2005), the concept of corruption can be extended to include "legal corruption", in which power is abused within the confines of the law, given that those in power often have the ability to make laws for their protection. Besides, corruption can be petty – small favours between a small number of people – or grand – corruption that affects the government on a large scale –, depending on the scale and people involved (cf. Elliott, 1997). In line with this understanding, Tandi and Mawere (2018) discuss corruption cases related to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) scandal involving the then Minister of Agriculture, Kumbirai Kangai and the NOCZIM scandal which involved the former cabinet minister Chikowore. Academics such as

Uneke (2010) argue that whichever way one looks at corruption, it has undesirable effects on political, economic and social development. Economically, it contributes adversely to national wealth depletion, while politically, it constitute a handicap to democratic processes and institutions, which in turn deter both local and foreign domestic investment (see also, Transparency International, 2006). Oftenly, corruption is used by “bureaucrats probably to mount bottle necks in the bureaucratic structures” (Uneke, 2010: 115), purposely for the reason of using them as bargaining chips to extort bribes from consumers seeking services.

In most cases, corruption results from bad leadership “coupled with the absence of a functional reward and punishment system through which a framework of values could have been instituted, to make impossible the tragedy of corrupt enrichment and wastage of public resources” (*The Guardian*, 30 October 2006). Corruption, thus, symbolises needless additional costs to business enterprises and make efficient operations extremely difficult. In the context of Zimbabwe during Mugabe’s reign, on many occasions people were willing to pay bribes to the bureaucrats in order to receive services, and/or minimise costs on their businesses. For instance, police roadblocks with which many officers extorted money from motorists and the general public, were institutionalised as a permanent source of extra-legal income for corrupt public officials. This means that in Zimbabwe corruption has influenced socio-economic and political development, the breakdown of good governance and democracy, and adversely affected the economic growth and reduced the resources available for the development of infrastructure, the public sector and anti-poverty programmes.

Let us hasten to note that corruption in post-colonial Zimbabwe was inherited largely from the colonial government where it was deeply imbedded in the politics of the time as well as in the economic problems that confronted the post-colonial state after independence. Zimbabwe inherited corrupt, underdeveloped institutions and economies that were characteristically skewed and susceptible to the international economic changes and fluctuations (Szeftel 2000; Gatsheni 2006, 2011; and Ranger *et al* 2000). Although Zimbabwe

was politically independent, the economy was still dominated by minority “whites” and international corporate interests. It was not weaned from this Western dependency. This was complimented by the fact that the colonial institutions, most of which were corrupt, were inherited by the Mugabe government as such without change.

Within a decade after independence, the Mugabe government failed to sustain itself and lacked the capacity and sufficient resources to meet the demands placed on it by independence. High birth rates, increased need for educational infrastructure, rapid urbanisation and the expectations of rapid change, all strained the state and its liberal democratic structures. The institutions that the state inherited at independence were designed to meet the limited economic interests of the colonial state. They were planned for the exploitation of export products and not to accommodate the democratic demands grafted onto it by independence (Szeftel, 2000). This is what the Mugabe government seemed to have missed.

In the race to meet the demands of the masses and distribute the state resources by the Mugabe government, Zimbabwe shifted from a bureaucratic administrative system that emphasised good governance to the sovereignty of politics and this according to Hope (2000), led to a politicised bureaucracy that engaged in the centralised economic decision-making and patrimonialism. Sibudubudu (2002) argues that this came with extremely frail formal institutions, personalised rule and prevalent clientelist networks. It is for this major reason that the Mugabe government has always dominated the state apparatus, especially security institutions such as the army and the police, among other arms. Officials who occupied bureaucratic positions did so less to perform public service than to obtain or at least promote the accumulation of private riches at the expense of the state. Tizor (2009) argues that the bureaucrats always enjoy access to a range of forms of illicit rents and petty corruption which constitute important entitlements of office.

In the case of “Mugabe’s Zimbabwe”, the ZANU-PF government of former President Mugabe undermined the effectiveness of the state administration by using it for systematic patronage and clientelist practices in order to maintain political order.

Any dissent voices, including opposition leaders and supporters, especially from the MDC party, were met with violence and associated unjust treatment. Additionally, political mobilisation in Zimbabwe was founded on a system of clientelist politics. By clientelist politics, we mean “the exchange of goods and services for political support, often involving an implicit or explicit quid-pro-quo (tit for tat/favour for favour)” (Stokes, Thad, Marcelo and Valeria, 2013). On the basis of this kind of politics, Mugabe’s ruling ZANU-PF often bought votes from the public through distribution of food handouts, political favours, and state resources, among other such goods and services. Besides, Mugabe’s party gave birth to parallel and unofficial structures such as Zimbabwe Liberations War Veterans Association (ZLWVA) (Mhanda 2011), and the Youth Militia (a group of people used by ZANU-PF to advance its political agenda) that also held more power and authority on behalf of the ruling party than the formal administration (Bratton and van de Walle 1999; Bracking 2009). This, according to Makumbe (2011) was a form of corruption that has come out of politicisation of the state by ZANU-PF. In return for showing the loyalty to the political elite these supporters gained access to the state resources, were awarded a range of payoffs, including jobs, loans, immunity to state laws and embezzlement of the state resources as sources of wealth accumulation (Robinson, 1993; Sibudubudu, 2002). This resonates with Tandi and Mawere (2018), who argue that there have been quite a number of cases of uneven distribution of resources especially between ZANU-PF and MDC supporters in rural Zimbabwe.

Mugabe, misguided policies and the suffering of Zimbabweans

The 1990s saw the economic deterioration of the Zimbabwean economy. This owes much to the wasteful state expenditure and policies that favoured colonial institutions deemed necessary for economic viability. Regrettably, widespread corruption and cronyism, failed management of parastatals, dependence on external markets, and the loss of private investment led to increasing public debt. By 1990, continued development along the lines of Mugabe’s

socialist vision was unfeasible and conflicted with the realities of neo-liberal Western economics. Therefore, under pressure from the World Bank and IMF, the Ministry of Finance announced in 1991 the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) package. ESAP was derived from neo-liberal economic theory, which believes that economies grow best through trade liberalisation and free markets. Competition through importation encourages specialisation and diversification and weeds out inefficient producers through a form of economic natural selection. Additionally, open trade improves welfare conditions due to increased opportunity and decreased poverty.

Despite previous failures where structural adjustment caused misery, increased hardships, deterioration of human development, destruction of poor peoples' livelihoods, [destruction of the] environment, high rates of inequality, [and the] marginalisation of poor countries and their communities (see for example, Jauch 1999; Masaka 2011; Mawere 2011; Muvunzi 2011), Zimbabwe was forced to accept ESAP in order to receive additional loans from Bretton Woods institutions. In any case SAPs are "built on the fundamental condition that debtor countries have to repay their debt in hard currency. This leads to a policy of 'exports at all costs' because exports are the only way for developing countries to obtain such currencies" (Jauch 1999: 5), and ultimately debt crisis and grinding poverty. To combat critics of ESAP, officials emphasised the programme's "homegrown" nature, claiming that unlike previous attempts to introduce neo-liberal economic reforms in the developing world, Zimbabwe would protect its citizenry from the pitfalls of liberalisation. However, it can be argued in view of ESAP's introduction in Zimbabwe that the Mugabe regime's true motivation for introducing economic liberalisation was that after a decade of independence the state was no longer a viable medium for wealth acquisition.

While the World Bank and IMF often claim that SAPs were largely successful, it is widely acknowledged that these were a failure in many African countries such as Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, ESAP did not create wealth. Neither did it promote economic development

or benefitted the poor. Instead, ESAP failed to “protect the delivery of social services” (*Ibid*). Further, it has collapsed domestic manufacturing and replaced domestic products with imported consumer goods, which are more expensive and in fact beyond the reach of many. Other negative effects of SAPs as noted by Jauch (1999) and Touissant and Comanne (1995) were:

- Privatisation, which allowed international capital to buy state enterprises at very low costs.
- Tax reforms such as Value Added Tax (VAT), which placed a greater tax burden on middle and low-income groups while foreign capital receives generous tax holidays.
- Deregulation of banking system, which led to very high interest rates which in turn made most goods unaffordable to the majority.
- Elimination of subsidies and price controls, which led to price increases and substantial reduction in real earnings in both the formal and informal sectors.
- Free movement of foreign exchange, which allowed foreign companies to repatriate their profits and the laundering of ‘dirty money’ from offshore banking accounts.
- Cost-recovery programmes in the health sector, which increased the inequality in health care delivery and increased the number of people without access to health care, and
- Cuts in public sector employment, coupled with bankruptcies of local companies, which led to increased unemployment.

In Zimbabwe, as in other African countries such as Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, among others, these imposed programmes resulted in severe poverty and hardship of the majority, as many employed people were laid off while cost of living continued soaring to unprecedented levels.

Consequently, socio-economic development and progress that Zimbabwe fared in the 1980s was clearly eroded as from the 1990s when ESAP was introduced by the Mugabe government, with falling per capita incomes, unemployment and underemployment, accelerating ecological degradation and hunger. For these reasons, by

mid-1990s, the government of Mugabe was already being confronted with serious internal and external contradictions, which intensified marginalisation and impoverishment of the Zimbabwean majority. The end result of the imposed SAPs on Zimbabwe was a deepening political and economic crisis, which became more pronounced with mounting foreign debts, declining exports, refugee problems, and urban strife due to increased food prices and retrenchment. The failure of wage employment to keep up with the formal sector wage-employment created unemployment and underemployment. Zimbabwe's crisis reached alarming proportions in the late 1990s (Kadenge, Ndoro & Zizwi, 1992), as it was precipitated by Mugabe's decision to reward each registered war veteran Z\$50. 000 pension pay out plus Z\$2. 000 per month to quieten their protest over his failure to provide them with decent jobs and other survival needs. This poor move was aggravated by another ill-calculated decision in 1998, when Mugabe's government decided to deploy troops in support of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government that was fighting rebels in the west-African country.

As underlined earlier, when Zimbabwe adopted ESAP, the major features of the policies pursued included labour retrenchment, trade liberalisation and currency devaluation, subsidy withdrawal, and an increase in user fees (which rendered basic services like health and education unaffordable to the average worker). As elsewhere, macroeconomic reforms had very serious political implications in Zimbabwe. These measures were seen by many as politically risky because of independent Zimbabwe's colonial experience with unfair adjustment policies. Industrial restructuring and the upgrading of industrial competitiveness were components of the reforms prescribed by the IMF and World Bank. An implicit assumption of SAPs has been that enterprise-level inefficiencies in the so-called developing countries such as those of Africa, are primarily a reflection of inappropriate macro-economic policies and distortions in resource allocation precipitated by selective industrial policies. Reforms, therefore, were based on the premise that appropriate adjustment at the macro-level, accompanied by the freeing up of market forces, liberalisation of trade and privatisation of parastatals

would provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for industrial recovery and economic growth. Thus, for IMF and the World Bank, inefficient economic activities of many [African] states existed only because of government induced distortions rather than the presence of learning sequences and market SAPs failures (Mkandawire 1992; Remmer 1993). Yet, as already been demonstrated in the preceding discussion, the opposite is true. It remains a fact in bold that SAPs programmes generally led to retrenchment, skyrocketing of prices of goods, rising inflation to record levels and steep devaluation of local currencies. In many African countries, these situations have led to loss of power, instability and/or increased military repression. Many governments have been toppled, but those that have survived have used severe repression and/or manipulation of their masses with rhetoric. In recent years, countries like Zambia and Zimbabwe have witnessed a series of strikes, food riots followed by military intervention that left eight people dead in Harare alone (Schillinger, 1998), and the ousting of political leaders through protests. As Schillinger (1998) notes with reference to ESAP in Zimbabwe:

An unprecedented series of mass national protests over deteriorating economic conditions has brought the country-and its first president, Robert Mugabe-to its worst political crisis since independence in 1980. Many once held hope for a model democracy, characterised by competitive politics, free expression, and a vibrant privatised economy. Most now see another Kenya in the making where corruption, repression, and mismanagement stagnate a potentially prosperous state (1998: 1).

In fact, the failure of ESAP in the 1990s left the Zimbabwean state on a weak economic foundation and the Mugabe government that had assumed the role of the state failed to meet the demands of its clients. It is worth mentioning that ESAP eroded all the impressive advances made in the first decade of independence. Most importantly, ESAP proved costly for the country's educational as well as health reforms. By 1995, the Mugabe regime was undergoing what essentially amounted to a counter revolution as all the impressive gains made in the first decade of independence in education and health were eroded by ESAP. As Mlambo (1997: 83)

notes, the Zimbabwe government was forced to admit in 1996 that owing to ESAP, the gains made earlier in the provision of health services were in serious danger of being eroded. He, thus, notes that:

During ESAP, Government resources have decreased so that real expenditure on health has declined because of a combination of rising costs, inflation, declining value of Z\$, emergence of costly diseases.....such as AIDS and TB....The gains that have been made to date are under threat.

As early as 1995, a growing number of studies had begun to document the negative impact of ESAP on the poor majority of Zimbabweans. For instance, the government's decision to deregulate prices and remove subsidies for basic consumer goods in 1991 caused severe hardships for the Zimbabwean poor. Michael O'Hearney (1994) as cited in Mlambo (1997: 84) notes that:

The deregulation of price controls and the abolition of subsidies... have had a disastrous impact on many families both in urban and rural areas. Cooking oil, margarine, sugar, bread, maize meal, electricity, water and transport prices have more than tripled over the last year and a half.... As a result, begging and crime indicators of intense economic hardships, have risen dramatically in Zimbabwe, particularly in cities like Harare, the capital.

Commenting on the effects of ESAP on Zimbabwean workers, the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Morgan Tsvangirai (cited in Mlambo, 1997:84) noted in 1992 that as a result of deregulation of prices and removal of basic protection for workers,

We have all experienced for the past year or so a massive increase in prices, they have gone up over 40%, buying the same goods that cost Z\$100 in 1980 now takes about Z\$500. Labour is becoming cheapened daily and the workers standard of living is declining. Even the middle class are affected with university professors forced to resort to outside

part time....since independence, workers have gained [from] minimum wage laws and protection against arbitrary dismissal, but ESAP says the laws must go.

Besides, as the state resources shrank due to high demands of scarce commodities and competing factions of the ruling government, ESAP became a source of political corruption (Bond 1998). This economic crisis intensified corruption. The state controlled imports and export licenses, access to foreign exchange, government grants and loans, and the payment of duties and taxes. This made it an important institution for the party to control. The state generated capital that the Mugabe government used to obtain and maintain the regime security and also provided the framework through which these resources were channelled to the regime's supporters. Doig (2006) argues that the state is a provider and an allocator of services and functions such as education, health and various lucrative contracts. It is this standpoint which makes the state a source of attraction to the ruling party.

By 1997 the combined effects of corporatism and liberalisation had produced serious unemployment that could not be absorbed on the land because of over-crowding in the communal areas. This produced a threatening demonstration from civil war veterans in August 1997, and a large pay-out that destabilised the budget. The government then announced their intention to transfer white-owned farms to Africans in 1998, and invaded the Democratic Republic of the Congo with even further growth in budget deficits and in opportunities for primary accumulation by army officers and key politicians (Jauch 1999). Currency controls led to overvaluation and suppressed exports, budget deficits to inflation, while the efficiency of the parastatals was eroded as they were increasingly used to reward elite supporters. All of this worsened the economic crisis and intensified the political opposition originally generated by ESAP.

The critical civic and economic organisations intensified their opposition and came together to form the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 that won the political support of most urban voters and those in the former ZAPU areas. This new

alliance demonstrated its power when it defeated the government in the constitutional referendum in 2000, and in subsequent parliamentary and presidential elections that the MDC would probably have won but for electoral manipulation. These political threats then intensified the use of state power to transfer resources as the government appealed to anti-colonial nationalism to justify the forcible expropriation of most commercial farms that it redistributed to small-scale settlers and key members of the political and bureaucratic elite. The following five years were marked by hyperinflation, a collapse in the value of the currency and personal and corporate savings, widespread bankruptcies, an end of the tourist industry, plummeting exports and food production, and the withdrawal of donor support to the government. Output and exports declined by more than 50 percent between 2001 and 2005, generating an interlocking food, fuel, fiscal and foreign exchange crises (Muvunzi 2011; Mawere 2011).

The ruthless managing of political disorder and economic breakdown by the Mugabe regime

During his term of office, Mugabe met with numerous dissent voices mainly because of his unpopular political and economic policies at different times. In response to some of his misguided policies and unfair acts of misgovernance, individuals, the masses and civil society groups often went out to the streets to demonstrate for sanity and adherence to the rule of law.

In response to dissenting voices, the Mugabe government managed these “disruptive acts” with political attitude, skill and ruthlessness. Formal democratic elections continued to be held, and Mugabe made skilful use of an anti-colonial and nativist nationalist rhetoric to maintain political support in its rural heartland and more especially in the region where African rulers had been very reluctant to criticise the regime. However, Mugabe and his government also suppressed opposition newspapers, and used organised violence in rural constituencies to intimidate opposition supporters, manipulated the vote, used the chieftaincy to pressure local voters into supporting

ZANU-PF, and the state's maize-marketing monopoly to threaten rural voters' access to food (cf. Muvunzi 2011).

The MDC has dealt with this pressure with some considerable skill and restraint, but been discredited by its inability to win elections. In 2005, the regime won a two-thirds majority in Parliament and introduced a new Senate. The MDC suffered a major split over its decision not to contest these elections, and its ability to operate as a viable political force was open to question by the end of 2005. In May 2005, the Mugabe regime mounted 'Operation *Murambatsvina*' (or 'Operation Drive out Rubbish') to destroy most urban informal settlements and markets because it saw the urban poor as a source of political opposition and economic non-compliance causing some 700,000 people to lose either their homes, their sources of livelihood or both (Mlambo, 2008; Moore, 2008). In fact, during the period leading up to Operation *Murambatsvina* the "urban dwellers had become politically suspect in the eyes of the ruling ZANU PF elite" (Mlambo, 2008: 21), and they constituted the major brunt of the urban clean-up operation. Clearly the case of Operation *Murambatsvina* was an attempt to get rid of what was seen by ZANU-PF as an "unpatriotic" urban population. The operation also revealed the paranoid attempts by Mugabe to cling on power and above all that the post-colonial Zimbabwean institutions were failing such that the state was indeed in the "throes of economic, political and cultural crisis" (Vambe, 2008: 1), which needed an immediate solution. To say it all, many people, including children of school age, the old and the sick, women with newly born babies, the lame and the visually challenged, were all forced to sleep in the open air at unfriendly winter temperatures. The soaring urban unemployment levels and the high rate of urban migration increased the rate of poverty as it resulted in house shortages and increased urban unemployment. This resulted in many of those affected by Operation *Murambatsvina* migrating back to the rural areas. The situation created by the Mugabe government was enough for Mugabe to lose popularity both nationally and internationally. For Mugabe government not to lose political grip at least locally, it made sure that the Operation *Murambatsvina* provided a small group of crony

businessmen, army officers, police officers and senior government officials who supported ZANU-PF, with “enough rewards” to retain their support and give them a vested interest in the continuation of the politics of disorder. Threats of reprisals from government security agents and grinding poverty made it impossible for the MDC to mobilise mass demonstrations capable of destabilising the ZANU-PF regime.

However, the regime’s ability to maintain its control was being constantly eroded by economic failures that tightened budget and foreign exchange constraints and eroded its capacity to deliver services and control dissent. By 2007, urban and rural food deficits had grown to unprecedented levels, while supplies of food and fuel to the army and police also dwindled. A new governor of the Reserve Bank, Gideon Gono, attempted to restore economic discipline, but his attempts were never successful. Attention should be drawn to the fact that when Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, the ZW\$1 was equal to US\$1.50 and at that time the highest note in currency circulation was ZW\$20 (Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, 2011). Things were, however different by 2007, when many industries were forced to close down operations due to shortage of foreign currency and economic hardships, resulting in shortage of basic commodities around the country. By 2008 hyperinflation had reached soaring unprecedented levels. The Zimbabwean dollar was ruined by hyperinflation, which hit 500 billion per cent in 2008 and this was a time when prices of basic commodities in shops would change for more than 10 times a day at a rate of more than 500% (*The Guardian*, 2015). This triggered anger in the ordinary people, resulting election boycotts, strikes, demonstrations and uprisings across the country.

In the midst of shimmering tension that was in the country, the year 2008 saw the Zimbabwean nation conducting harmonised elections. While the MDC-T candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai claimed victory in the presidential elections polling 47.9% of the votes compared to 43.2% polled by Mugabe (*BBC News*, 2 May 2008), the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) argued that he had failed to garner the simple majority which was required to win the elections hence it called for a re-run of the Presidential elections. To the MDC-

T party and its supporters, this, in the diplomatic words of their leader Morgan Tsvangirai, this was “scandalous day light robbery” (*Ibid*) that denied opposition the highest political office in Zimbabwe. This led ZEC to call for a re-run of the Presidential Election on the same year. In the fear of losing again to Tsvangirai once again, the Mugabe ZANU-PF, through state agents, pursued a violent campaign that left many homeless, some maimed, and others dead, leading Tsvangirai to pull out of the run-off, citing intimidation and violence against his supporters. Consequently, Mugabe was declared a winner, which however, necessitated the formation of a government of national unity (GNU) in 2009.

Mugabe and the education sector in Zimbabwe

The time of independence in Africa saw most countries in the continent, including Zimbabwe, coming out of a period plagued by serious colonial neglect in the provision of social service facilities such as education. In the case of formal schooling, factors such as racial segregation, low enrolment rates and quality problems were common. Consequently, in drawing up the guidelines for an educational policy, the quantitative expansion of education for integration of the majority of the population, was a main priority for Mugabe’s government, just as it was for most other new African governments. Popular demand for increased access to education for all was followed by a strong community commitment to the building of schools, teacher accommodation, and so on. Donors were generally in favour of contributing towards the educational sector. Education was a key instrument for achieving development and thereby building the newly independent African nations. In actual terms, a substantial increase in primary and secondary school enrolments, just after independence in Zimbabwe, could be observed. As UNDP (1999) noted, during his tenure as the leader of ZANU-PF and government, Robert Mugabe managed to increase the literacy rate to 90% from unrecognisable rates predominant prior to independence, making Zimbabwe the second highest in terms of literacy rate in the continent. Between 1980 and 1981 the total

enrolment was doubled (up to 150 000 pupils) and that increase continued, to reach more than 900 000 pupils in 1990 such that even an intensive teacher-training scheme was not able to produce enough qualified and dedicated teachers to overcome the gap (see Chivore 1990). In many schools, especially those in urban areas, a kind of double shift, that is commonly known as hot seating, was introduced to cope with the increased number of pupils. On the same note, the tertiary sector which up until the early 1990s only had one university, the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, was not spared by the expansion. From mid-1990s, the number of universities grew significantly, with a technical university in Bulawayo (National University for Science and Technology – NUST) and a private (Methodist) university in Mutare (the African University). At the same time a number of constituent colleges allied to the main University of Zimbabwe were established, as well as an Open University, the Zimbabwe Open University. In short, Zimbabwe had made an impressive impact in educational expansion during the first decade of independence.

Unfortunately, as elsewhere on the continent, this expansion could not be upheld with maintained standards of quality. In itself, the expansion created a new form of inequality among the African population. Colclough and Lewin (1993: 109) capture this aptly when they observed that, “a system of bad schools for the poor majority and good schools for the rich”. Furthermore, it was apparent that even if the primary enrolment rates were well above capacity that did not necessarily mean that all children were actually having access to education. The privatisation of tertiary education, for example, saw many intellectually gifted children failing to access tertiary education, while children of the rich had access even when they were not all that [intellectually] gifted. This was aggravated by the fact that the period between 1997 and 2008, saw most of the qualified personnel of the tertiary sector – university professors, medical doctors, lawyers and nurses – leaving the country for greener pastures either in the region or overseas.

Worse still, the local labour market had no possibility of absorbing the many new job seekers, who were continually churned

out of the tertiary institutions in a country where industrialisation was dwindling. The consequences of this state of affairs was to be realised towards the end of the 1990s, most especially with the effects of ESAPs which saw many people retrenched and industries closed. It is noticeable that even against the background of an impressive educational expansion during the first decade since independence, a low proportion of the total population has been educated above Form IV. In 1992 only some 4 per cent had acquired any form of tertiary education. Most of these had attained some kind of diploma, while the number of university graduates was just above 35 000 (0.6 per cent). Worse still, a low proportion of the graduates were females (Government of Zimbabwe 1994a). Though the situation on gender proportion seem to have positively improved by the time Mugabe was ousted from power, unemployment levels of those with tertiary continued soaring.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the political, economic, and social factors which directly led to the impoverishment of the Zimbabwean majority under the Mugabe regime. Throughout majority rule, Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF steered a ship sinking under the weight of its colonial legacy, the ideals of Mugabe's socialist vision, mismanagement and corruption at every level of government, and the crushing effects of economic liberalisation. Desire for political consolidation and one partyism resulted in the violent repression of human rights and condemnation by an international community that once held Mugabe in the highest regard. Additional strain came from worsening economic conditions. While not comparable to the crippling levels of the following decade, by the late 1980s, Zimbabwe's excessive spending on social programs, coupled with corruption and global economic decline, resulted in rising levels of indebtedness to international financial institutions (IFI's). Increased dependency on IFI's and the need for additional loans necessitated Zimbabwe's acceptance of the IMF and World Bank Economic Structural Adjustment Programme in 1991. While economic

liberalisation was intended to open doors for new business ventures while simultaneously weeding out poorly performing enterprises, ESAP instead resulted in rising unemployment, increased poverty, declining industrial output, and new opportunities for corrupt governance.

As a consequence of increased corruption by government officials, the failure of ESAP, a marginalisation of civil society organisations, unrealised promises of land resettlement, and their costly military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe had lost legitimacy with the Zimbabwean people. Successful strikes and demonstrations by labour unions and land seizures by veterans groups only emphasized the rising opposition against the government. Additionally, the complete lack of democratic stability, disregard for judicial authority, mass human rights violations, and economic destitution left IFT's reluctant to offer any aid to the one-time breadbasket of Africa. At present, Zimbabwe is in the throes of a major humanitarian crisis. It has been beleaguered by ever increasing rates of HIV and AIDS, low population growth, acute food shortages, radically decreasing life expectancy, hyperinflation, and insecurity of life and property. Additionally, the growing brutality of political and electoral oppression has engendered significant domestic, regional, and international condemnation. News media, human rights organizations, and foreign governments called for the end of Zimbabwe unchecked deterioration at the hands of Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF.

While it has been less than thirty years since Zimbabwe gained its independence through a prolonged and bloody conflict, it stands as an example of how a nation's colonial legacy, in concert with the realities of the international economic system, can result in the deterioration of peace and prosperity. However, Zimbabwe's unfulfilled promise speaks to not only to its own colonial legacy, but also the aftereffects of colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Racial tensions, in conjunction with the ever-present spectre of land, created deep seeded distrust between the new majority government and colonial institutions necessary for economic, political, and social

stability. Additionally, the ideological conflict between Mugabe's socialist vision and Western democratic principles resulted in a strained relationship between Zimbabwe and international lenders. Finally, IMF and World Bank's structural adjustment programmes represented the continued imposition of Western institutions on the developing world. Ultimately, Zimbabwe illustrates the ability of failed governance, when left unchecked, to be intensified by international intervention, leading to the breakdown of social harmony.

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First Ladies Undoing their Husbands: Extravagance, Conjugal Dictatorship and the Downfall of Robert Mugabe

Fidelis Peter Thomas Duri and Eusebiah Chikonyora

Introduction

While many Zimbabweans had grievances with Robert Mugabe's authoritarian rule as the President of the country and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party from 1980 to 2017, some revered and valorised him for the role he played in the liberation struggle that won the country's independence in 1980 and for some of his post-independence policies. The majority of Zimbabweans, however, would not forgive his wife, Grace, for a number of reasons which included her unscrupulous opportunism of falling in love with the President and having children out of wedlock with him while the then First Lady, Sally Mugabe, was on the deathbed with a terminal kidney ailment, and for cheating on her then husband to whom she was still married (Harvey, 16 November 2017; Levin, 4 December 2017).

What also agitated many Zimbabweans was that, after marrying Mugabe following Sally's death, Grace became an extremely extravagant First Lady who embarked on lavish spending mostly abroad, while the majority of Zimbabweans were grappling with extreme poverty (Fraser, 16 November 2017; Kiapi, 15 July 2009; Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017; Towers, 15 November 2017). In addition to her unbridled extravagance of legendary proportions, she exploited her status as the First Lady to abuse state resources and amass wealth, including creating a business empire at home and abroad, at a time when the country was engulfed in a debilitating socio-economic crisis, particularly from the year 2000

(Bletchly, 16 March 2012; Marima, 29 November 2017; Martin, 18 November 2017; *Zimbabwe Online Press*, 16 July 2012).

Politically, she took advantage of her position as the First Lady to interfere in the administration of both the ruling ZANU-PF party and the Zimbabwean government. Furthermore, she became viewed as the major driving force behind her ageing husband's authoritarian rule. She also ended up harbouring strong political ambitions to succeed her husband (Sang, 17 November 2017; Simmons, 15 November 2017). In terms of gender politics, Grace Mugabe's involvement in Zimbabwean politics should not be viewed in the context of feminism. There is no evidence to suggest any meaningful link between her political machinations and feminist aspirations to improve the livelihoods of the generality of African women. In actual fact, as shall be discussed later in this chapter, her thirst for political power, coupled with her great appetite for personal aggrandisement and lavish spending are critical attributes of femocracy (Mama, 1995). Her extravagant lifestyle and political shenanigans, characterised by arrogance and combative tendencies only helped to shatter her reputation in the eyes of many Zimbabweans. These developments made her to become, arguably, "Africa's most hated woman" (Seales, 29 November 2017: 1). Notwithstanding other reasons, Grace's personality and unbridled political ambitions, largely contributed to the end of Robert Mugabe's 37-year rule.

That said, this chapter argues that such 'femocratic' antics by some First Ladies are in actual fact veritable manifestations of patriarchal dominance in politics in many parts of the world where women exploit their husbands' political positions to gain access to state power which they manipulate for purposes of personal aggrandisement. Indeed, as will be noted later in this chapter, the machinations of First Ladies such as Marie Antoinette, Mary Todd Lincoln, Imelda Marcos, Safia Gaddafi and Elena Ceausescu, among many others, attest to this. A fascinating paradox that emerges, as the political developments in Zimbabwe during Mugabe's rule showed, is that the lavish lifestyles of First Ladies and their involvement in politics antagonises many sections of the population, often leading to the downfall of their husbands.

Situating the chapter in academic discourses of feminism and femocracy

In the contemporary world, the participation of women in various administrative structures of the state is often viewed as one of the important indexes of progress and democracy by many analysts (Mama, 1995). This is largely because women have constituted one of the most oppressed and marginalised sections of the population in many societies around the world since recorded historical times (Parpart and Staudt, 1989). While women are entitled to play critical roles in the administrative structures of the state, the extent to which First Ladies can be involved warrants careful consideration since they may exercise undue influence over their husbands, in addition to abusing state resources. It is against this background that this section examines the concepts of feminism and femocracy in the context of gender politics in order to illuminate Grace Mugabe's contribution in the downfall of her husband.

Mama (1995: 41) defines feminism as "the popular struggle of...women for their liberation from the various forms of oppression they endure." On the other hand, femocracy can be defined as:

...An anti-democratic female power structure which claims to exist for the advancement of ordinary women, but is unable to do so because it is dominated by a small clique of women whose authority derives from their being married to powerful men, rather than from any actions or ideas of their own. Femocracies exploit the commitments of the international movement for greater gender equality while actively only advancing the interests of a small female elite, and in the long term undermining women's interests by upholding the patriarchal status quo. In short, femocracy is a feminine autocracy running in parallel to the patriarchal oligarchy upon which it relies for its authority and what it supports completely (Ibid, p.41).

It is quite apparent from these definitions that feminism is relatively more inclusive than femocracy in its commitment to attain gender equality. Femocracy is quite exclusive in its operations since

it is primarily meant to safeguard and uphold the interests of elite women even at the expense of the livelihoods of their ordinary counterparts, whether male or female. In their efforts to safeguard and enhance their interests, these elite women manipulate their connections with influential patriarchal structures which they continue to support as long their selfish ends are not compromised.

Closely linked to femocracy is what Mama (1995) terms 'The First Lady Syndrome' which refers to the practice by some women to capitalise on their status as wives of Heads of State to assume influential positions in the state. In order to illustrate this practice, Mama (1995) gives examples of former First Ladies such as Nana Agyeman Rawlings of Ghana and Maryam Babangida of Nigeria. As history has shown, such First Ladies have amassed vast wealth for themselves and influenced their husbands in making political decisions. As will be noted later in this chapter, Grace Mugabe managed to take advantage of her status as the First Lady of Zimbabwe to amass wealth for herself in addition to influencing her ageing husband, President Robert Mugabe, in making political decisions for the ruling ZANU-PF party and the country, some of which were not well received by many stakeholders.

It is without doubt, therefore, that femocracy does little in promoting gender equality, democracy and development. As Jibrim Ibrahim (2005: 1) notes, femocracy creates "a dynamic in which political space... [is] appropriated and used by the wives and friends of men in power for purposes of personal aggrandisement, rather than for furthering the interests of women." In addition, it "is not a viable political phenomenon" (Ibid, p.57). In actual fact, femocracy is a matriarchal dictatorship that does not bring much sustainable change in the livelihoods of ordinary women and the society at large. Such matriarchal dispensations enable First Ladies to loot state resources and engage in conjugal dictatorship with their husbands against the wishes of the majority of citizens, a situation that can be likened to dynastic totalitarianism and state capture.

One important role of First Ladies often overlooked by many analysts is that of restraining their husbands and ensuring that they rule in accordance with the principles of good governance. It should

be underlined that there are some examples of First Ladies who opposed the authoritarian rule of their husbands. In the early 1990s, for example, Susana Higuchi castigated her husband, the then Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, as a tyrant. Fujimori swiftly responded by divorcing her and bestowing the status of First Lady to his daughter. In 2009 he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for gross human rights abuses (Geoghegan, 8 February 2012). The next section looks at some of the most notorious First Ladies in world history in order to place Grace Mugabe in some historical perspective.

Overview of some notorious First Ladies in world history

The major purpose of this section is to illustrate that Grace Mugabe was “part of a long tradition of over-powerful wives” (Lucie-Smith, 23 November 2017: 1). Discussion will focus on some First Ladies who exercised undue influence over their husbands to interfere in politics, loot state resources and amass wealth for themselves. As these examples show, many such unscrupulous First Ladies became very unpopular with the generality of the population to the extent of compromising their husbands’ tenure in power. Thus, a considerable number of First Ladies of dubious disposition contributed, unwillingly and unknowingly though, to the downfall of their husbands. The First Ladies discussed in this section in order to illustrate these points are Marie Antoinette, Mary Todd Lincoln, Imelda Marcos, Safia Gaddafi, Elena Ceausescu and Asma Al-Assad.

Marie Antoinette, 1755-1793

Marie Antoinette was the wife of King Louis XVI who ruled France at a time when the country was in socio-economic and political turmoil that culminated in the French Revolution (Peoples Democratic Party [PDP] Communications Department, 27 January 2017). She became very unpopular for influencing her husband’s decisions in the political administration of France. According to Ergang (1939: 649):

More reprehensible than her escapades was Marie Antoinette's interference in governmental affairs. After Louis became king, his wife gained a lifelong influence over him. This influence she used at times to find offices for her favourites or to remove ministers whom she disliked.

Pretorius (1985: 340-341) concurred:

...Louis XVI was a man of moral behaviour (which cannot be said of his queen Marie Antoinette)...In his fervour to institute reforms, Louis appointed able ministers...Marie Antoinette...did not understand the needs of the time, and therefore frequently exercised a wrong or harmful influence on her husband.

She also became infamous for using state funds to buy expensive clothes, jewellery and hosting parties (PDP, 27 January 2017). It is alleged that she used to put on a new pair of shoes every day throughout the year, thus 365 pairs of shoes a year (Moyo, 2015). She also reportedly bought her undergarments in the United States of America (Ibid). Furthermore, she became addicted to gambling and reportedly lost US\$1.5 million in one year alone (Ibid). In the words of Ergang (1939: 649-650):

The queen also gave much offence by her extravagance...Her love of fine clothes and adornments asserted itself. In addition to buying large quantities of feathers and fripperies with which to bedeck herself, Marie Antoinette spent vast sums for jewels when the royal treasury could ill support such expenditures. Next came gambling for high stakes, at which she sometimes lost large sums. Little wonder that the people who were in need of bread called her 'Madame Deficit' and denounced her as the cause of their poverty.

Barker (1993) attributes the poor reputation of Louis XVI's reign to the lavish lifestyle of his wife. In the end, the poor public opinion of the First Lady largely contributed in fuelling the French

Revolution in 1789 and subsequently led to the downfall of Louis XVI (PDP, 27 January 2017).

Mary Todd Lincoln (1818-1882)

Mary Todd Lincoln was the wife of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, who ruled from 1861 until his assassination in 1865 (Baker, 1986). She enjoyed frivolous spending and ended up compromising her husband's presidency by revealing state secrets in exchange for personal loans and gifts (PDP, 27 January 2017). At the height of the American Civil War in January of 1862, when the country was financially crippled with many Americans wallowing in poverty, she invited 500 guests for a lavish party (Baker, 1986).

She also became unpopular for putting on expensive clothing which angered many Americans given the socio-economic doldrums of the time (PDP, 27 January 2017). As Coffone (2013: 1) noted, Mary Todd Lincoln would often "have shopping frenzies where she purchased hundreds of dresses with matching shoes and accessories which she never even unpacked when she got home. The public was aware of these buying sprees and criticised her relentlessly." Mary Lincoln is also believed to have undertaken a one-day extravagant shopping trip to decorate the White House which cost the United States Treasury US\$20 000 (Baker 1986), whose value in 2013 would have been US\$500 000 (Schwartz, 17 February 2013). Some of the decorative items she acquired included a 190-piece set of Limoges china dishes for US\$3 195, a damask rug for the East Room worth US\$2 500 and a French wallpaper for US\$6 800 (Ibid).

Aisha Hamani Diouri

Aisha was the wife of Hamani Diouri, the President of Niger, during the 1960s (Ibrahim, 2005). She was reputed to be "even more powerful than her spouse, whom she was alleged to have controlled like a marionette. Her legendary powers in manipulating the country's elite and dictating the pace and content of cultural and social trends are recorded in the songs and poetry of the country" (Ibid, p.1). When Humani Diouri was overthrown during a military coup in

1966, the putschists spared his life but executed Aisha whom they largely blamed for having had an undue influence on her husband's running of the state (Ibid).

Imelda Marcos

Imelda Marcos was the First Lady of the Philippines during the reign of her husband, Ferdinand Marcos, from 1965 to 1986 (PDP, 27 January 2017). She gradually “became so powerful that she was the *de facto* Vice President of the Philippines, often leaving Ferdinand at home to conduct [his business]. Imelda called the shots on who must be in government or politics or out of it” (Majoni, 8 November 2017: 1). In 1980, for example, she was instrumental in the exiling of an opposition leader, Benigno Aquino Jnr (Ibid). She eventually assumed the presidency of the country when her husband began suffering from lupus (Ibid).

Her frequent travels around the world also made her very unpopular with many Philipinos (PDP, 27 January 2017). In addition, Imelda Marcos gained notoriety for owning thousands of expensive handbags and footwear (Majoni, 8 November 2017). She had a penchant for fashion, particularly shoes, at a time when many Philipinos were wallowing in chronic poverty. During one of her trips to New York, for instance, she purchased US\$3.5 million Michelangelo paintings, US\$2.5 million in jewellery and over US\$19 000 in night gowns (PDP, 27 January 2017).

Imelda Marcos became “the world’s best known collector of shoes” (Kiapi, 15 July 2009: 1). In 1986, she fled the country after an army-backed popular rising that deposed her husband, leaving behind at the presidential palace an assortment of valuables that included more than 1 220 pairs of shoes (Phiri, 11 January 2017; Vambe, 21 November 2017a). This was despite the painful reality that in 1986, when her husband was ousted, “many Filipinos lived barefoot and in abject poverty” (Seales, 29 November 2017: 1). Many of her shoes were confiscated by the state and housed in Marikina Museum after the First Family had fled into exile (Vambe, 21 November 2017a). Imelda Marcos later came back to the Philippines after the death of her husband to try her luck in politics (Ibid). As

will be demonstrated later in this chapter, the reigns of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines (1965-1986) and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe (1980-2017) illuminate “the role of the respective women in their husbands’ [long running] authoritarian rule and their appetite for glitz” (Majoni, 8 November 2017: 1).

Safia Gaddafi

Safia Gaddafi was the wife of the Libyan tyrant, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, who ruled from 1969 until 2011 when he was deposed and executed during the Arab Spring Revolution that swept across many Islamic countries of North Africa (Bletchly, 16 March 2012). Even though she was not actively involved in Libyan politics, she is believed to have taken advantage of her husband’s political position to amass wealth (Akdim, 8 March 2012). Safia had her own personal airline company known as Buraq Air (Ibid). During the last years of her husband’s rule, her personal fortune was believed to be more than £20 billion (Bletchly, 16 March 2012), approximately US\$28.8 billion (Akdim, 8 March 2012). When her husband was deposed, she reportedly fled across the Algerian border with her daughter, Aisha, and was said to have escaped with a stash of 20 tonnes of gold (Bletchly, 16 March 2012).

Elena Ceausescu

Elena Ceausescu was the wife of Nicolai Ceausescu, the communist dictator of Romania who ruled with an iron grip for 24 years from 1965 to 1989 (Seales, 29 November 2017). The Romanian First Family lived a luxurious life while the majority of Romanians struggled with chronic poverty, endless power failures and constant surveillance by the secret police (*British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] News*, 8 April 2016). Elena was notorious for lavish spending on coats made from the skin and fur of several wild animals such as foxes, leopards, jaguars, zebras and tigers. Some of the expensive coats were displayed for journalists as Elena and her husband attempted to flee a popular revolt by helicopter in December 1989. The couple was, however, captured and sentenced to death after a summary trial on 25 December 1989. They were put before the firing squad where

Nicolai died chanting the left-wing anthem, the *Internationale*, while Elena met the same fate screaming obscenities (Seales, 29 November 2017). The luxurious goods once owned by Elena and the First Family were later put up for sale by a Romanian auction company (*BBC News*, 8 April 2016).

Asma Al-Assad

Presently, Asma Al-Assad is the wife of Bashar Al-Assad, the Syrian dictator who has been in power since 2000 (PDP, 27 January 2017). She is nicknamed “the modern-day Marie Antoinette” because of her “overly-lavish lifestyle” while many Syrians are languishing in dire poverty (Ibid, p.1). She allegedly spent US\$420 984 during a short visit to London (Ibid). She also has a penchant for expensive footwear and at one time bought a pair of crystal-encrusted high-heeled shoes for US\$6 000 (Ibid). She is reported to have spent almost US\$500 000 on furniture in addition to ordering five chandeliers, 11 ottomans and a rug worth about US\$20 000 (Vambe, 21 November 2017a).

Asma Al-Assad has also been condemned for supporting her husband’s brutal handling of the Syrian Civil War which began in 2011. By February 2012, the civil war had claimed the lives of more than 7 000 people (Geoghegan, 8 February 2012).

This section has examined some of most notorious First Ladies in world history and noted how, as was the case with Grace Mugabe, many of them took advantage of their husbands’ positions to interfere in politics, loot state resources, accumulate personal wealth and embark on lavish spending sprees. More often than not, such First Ladies support the dictatorial rule of their husbands whose reigns impoverished the generality of the citizenry. In many cases, as illustrated in this section, such activities by First Ladies led to the unpopularity and downfall of both their husbands and the First Family. Having explored some First Ladies of similar character in terms of notoriety, the chapter now turns to Grace Mugabe.

From rags to riches: A brief history of Grace Mugabe before she became First Lady

Grace Mugabe, nee Marufu (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017), was born in Benoni, a small mining town to the east of Johannesburg in South Africa (Sang, 17 November 2017), where her parents were migrant workers (Godwin, 16 November 2017). She grew up in the small Zimbabwean farming town of Enkeldorn (now Chivhu) where she sold chickens during her childhood (Ibid; Harvey, 16 November 2017; Ndebele, 17 November 2017; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 November 2017). She was educated at a missionary school before going to a secretarial college (Godwin, 16 November 2017).

At the age of 20 years, she married Stanley Goreraza, a Zimbabwean Air Force pilot, with whom she had two children (Levin, 4 December 2017; Sang, 17 November 2017). While married to Stanley Goreraza, she got employed as a typist in the Office of the President and Cabinet at Mugabe's State House in Harare (Harvey, 16 November 2017). During the mid-1980s, Mugabe began having an affair with his typist, Grace (Njikizana, 17 November 2017), "behind the back of his terminally ill wife, Sally" (Harvey, 16 November 2017: 1). In late 2017, the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) of Zimbabwe released information that Grace went on overseas trips and engaged in sexual relations with President Mugabe while she was still married to her first husband during the mid-1980s (Levin, 4 December 2017). She later revealed that: "I felt a bit uncomfortable. He told me that he and his wife discussed it and she was sort of agreeable" (Sang, 17 November 2017: 1). In 1987, she filed papers to divorce Stanley Goreraza, her first husband (Levin, 4 December 2017).

While the then First Lady, Sally, was terminally ill with a kidney ailment, Grace and President Mugabe had their first child, Bona, out of wedlock in 1990 (Ndebele, 17 November 2017; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 November 2017). By 1992, when Sally died (Swain and Sheridan, 15 February 2009), Mugabe had fathered two children with Grace (Harvey, 16 November 2017). Judging by the way events were to unfold, Grace Mugabe's decision to ditch her first husband and

have an affair with a married President Mugabe, with whom they had two children out of wedlock, is characteristic of “over-mighty and threatening females, who are all too ready to seek power through marriage” (Lucie-Smith, 23 November 2017: 1).

After Sally’s death, the couple held an extravagant wedding ceremony on 17 August 1996, attended by 40 000 people, including Nelson Mandela, the then South African President (Ibid). Joaquim Chissano, the then Mozambican President, was the best man at the wedding (Godwin, 16 November 2017). The First Family’s marriage in August 1996 was dubbed Zimbabwe’s “Wedding of the Century” (Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017: 1). With the so-called ‘Wedding of the Century’ on 17 August 1996, Grace officially became Zimbabwe’s First Lady.

Personal aggrandisement and Grace Mugabe’s business empire

The First Lady exploited her status to amass personal wealth and establish a business empire within Zimbabwe and abroad. In addition, Grace Mugabe became “the biggest looter of the country’s natural resources,” which made some Zimbabweans to characterise her as “the First Lady from hell” and “the Queen of corruption” (PDP, 27 January 2017: 1).

Before the couple were married, she used £500 000 of government funds to build a 30-bedroom mansion, which she named Graceland (Harvey, 16 November 2017). The funds that were used to build the mansion had been reserved by the government for the construction of low-cost housing units for Zimbabwe’s urban poor (Bletchly, 16 March 2012). In 2000, when it was ruled that the loans taken out on the Harare property were illegal, she sold the mansion to the then Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, for £3 million and kept the profits to herself (Kiapi, 15 July 2009). The Graceland saga exposed Grace as a corrupt First Lady who rechannelled government funds towards the construction of her personal mansion. Extreme selfishness and insensitivity on her part was revealed by her abuse of government funds that were meant for the urban poor. By keeping

the profits from the sale of the mansion after the loan deal had been reversed, Grace Mugabe displayed abominable self-seeking tendencies at a time when the country was engulfed in a socio-economic crisis.

With the launch of the chaotic Fast Track Land Reform Programme by the ZANU-PF government from 2000, Grace Mugabe and her family became “part of the new land aristocracy” in Zimbabwe (Ndebele, 17 November 2017: 1). The First Family allegedly owned several farms, most of which they obtained through the use of political muscle. Among the chain of farms confiscated was the renowned Omega Dairy Farm, owned by the First Lady, which was believed to be one of the largest dairy farms in southern Africa (Martin, 18 November 2017). In 2012, President Mugabe and his wife, Grace, were reportedly owning 13 farms, about 16 000 hectares in extent (Duri, 2017; *Zimbabwe Online Press*, 16 July 2012).

Grace Mugabe’s self-seeking tendencies and insensitivity to the plight of landless Zimbabweans was clearly illustrated by her relentless efforts to displace hundreds of villagers from Manzou Farm (also known as Arnold Farm) in the Mazowe District, 35 kilometres north of Harare. The villagers had been resettled on the farm in 2000 under the ZANU-PF government’s Fast-Track Land Reform Programme that was meant to redistribute white-owned farms to landless, poor blacks (Marima, 29 November 2017). After the villagers had been resettled, Manzou Farm was declared a National Heritage Site and Grace Mugabe sought “to expand her empire and allegedly turn the state-owned estate into a private game reserve” (Ibid, p.1). On 7 January 2015, six truckloads of heavily armed police evicted hundreds of villagers from the farm in order to pave way for a takeover by Grace Mugabe. Those who resisted eviction fought running battles with the police before taking the government to court (Ibid; Moyo 2015). The court awarded Manzou villagers the right to stay since there was no alternative relocation offer. With the backing of the First Family, the police often violated the court ruling by destroying the villagers’ homes, uprooting their crops and disrupting their income-generating projects (Ibid). In

January 2017, for example, the police raided the farm and destroyed the homes, crops and small-scale businesses of many villagers (Ibid).

Table: Farms allegedly owned by Grace and Robert Mugabe in 2012

(Source: *Zimbabwe Online Press*, 16 July 2012)

	Name of farm	Location	Area in hectares
1	Gushungo Estate	Darwendale	4 046
2	Gushungo Dairies	Mazowe	1 000
3	Mazowe Iron Mask	Mazowe	1 046
4	Mazowe Sigaru	Mazowe	873
5	Mazowe Gwebi Wood	Mazowe	1 200
6	Mazowe Gwina	Mazowe	1 445
7	Banket Leverdale	Mazowe	1 488
8	Mazowe Highfield	Norton	445
9	Norton Cressydale Estate	Norton	676
10	Norton Tanktara	Norton	575
11	Norton Clifford	Norton	1 050
12	John O’Groat	Norton	760
13	Bassville	Mazowe	1 200

Following in her sister’s footsteps, Reward Marufu, the First Lady’s brother mercilessly displaced resettled farmers and former farmworkers. During an incident of 23 July 2002, Caleb Chikwamba and 200 other workers at Leopard Vlei Farm in Mashonaland Central Province were evicted by Reward Marufu. The farm had been dubiously offered to Marufu by the Ministry of Lands. Explaining the ruthless manner in which they were evicted, Chikwamba explained: “Marufu first told us that everyone was fired...He came back later with several of his guards and known ZANU-PF youths and set ablaze our huts” (Worby, 2003: 52).

Land is not the only natural resource that the First Lady was alleged to have grabbed within the country. Among other corrupt activities, she is accused of plundering the country's diamonds (Harvey, 16 November 2017). As a result of these activities, Grace Mugabe was "one of the richest people in Zimbabwe" by December 2014 (Johnson, 13 December 2014: 1). Russell Goreraza, Grace's son with her first husband, also followed in her mother's footsteps by plundering Zimbabwe's natural resources (Mhlanga, 21 October 2013). On 17 October 2013, for example, he reportedly invaded Tolrose Goldmine, near the town of Kadoma, which was under the control of James Rushwaya, a Zimbabwean businessman. Goreraza allegedly raided the mine while in the company of 15 youths and former mineworkers clad in ZANU-PF regalia (Ibid). During the raid, they seized 500 grams of gold worth US\$25 000 after which they took control of all mining operations (Ibid). Such greed by the elite, as Duri (2017) argues, betrayed the core values of the liberation struggle which, among other issues, sought to distribute the country's resources equitably.

In mid-2016, Grace Mugabe bought a 48.5-hectare piece of land in the flashy Borrowdale Suburb, about 15 kilometres north of Harare, for more than 60 million South African Rand (R60 million) (Thornycroft, 19 December 2016). The piece of land is close to the mansion which the First Family built for about R140 million, and "where they choose to live rather than in the smaller, colonial-era State House" (Ibid, p.1). The property was bought from the Teede family. Reports indicated that Grace wanted it for purposes of setting up several upmarket homes in a security estate (Ibid). One Borrowdale resident stated that the Teedes had little option but to sell the land to Grace Mugabe "because they feared she would take it if they refused" (Ibid, p.1).

In addition to seizing vast tracts of land and looting the country's mineral resources, especially diamonds, the First Lady became a property baron after acquiring a number of immovable assets in Zimbabwe. From 2015, for example, Grace Mugabe began building a complex of private schools worth millions of dollars near the Mazowe Village, 35 kilometres west of Harare. The schools are

known by the locals in the area as the *Amai* (Mother) Grace Mugabe Schools, and were built on land that was seized without compensation from an old white couple in 2001 (Thornycroft, 19 December 2016). There is no doubt that the school was meant for elite children given that each pupil paid R50 000 (more than US\$4 000) per school term, with three terms a year (Ibid).

The First Lady did not only have properties and businesses in Zimbabwe, but also abroad. By January 2008, Grace Mugabe reportedly had a number of business investments in the Far East. In Hong Kong, for example, one investment was “a £4 million property in a walled and gated complex where residents enjoy quiet gardens, a clubhouse and a swimming pool” (Swain and Sheridan, 15 February 2009: 1). In mid-2017, it was estimated that the First Family’s fortunes exceeded US\$1 billion, a considerable portion of which was outside the country and included homes in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore (Martin, 18 November 2017).

Grace Mugabe became very infamous to many Zimbabweans as an extremely selfish and corrupt First Lady who capitalised on her husband’s position as the President of Zimbabwe to loot state resources and amass wealth for herself at a time when the country was in socio-economic doldrums. Like Marie Antoinette of France and the other First Ladies discussed in sections above, she abused state funds to cater for her personal needs (PDP, 27 January 2017).

Grace Mugabe’s lavish spending

Following her lavish wedding with Robert Mugabe in 1996, Grace soon developed tendencies of extravagant spending. As Sang (15 November 2017: 1) succinctly noted: “The opulent wedding was an early indication of Grace’s extravagant tastes.” Soon after the wedding, “she reportedly rejected two official residences offered to the couple, opting instead to order the construction of a new mansion. She has since reportedly overseen the construction of two palaces, one costing at least US\$26 million” (Ibid).

Before 2002, when the United States and the European Union imposed targeted sanctions, involving travel bans on Zimbabwe’s

elite, including Grace Mugabe, over the ZANU-PF's chaotic land seizures and accusations of rigged elections and brutal crackdowns on the political opposition (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017), the First Lady "would borrow a plane from the national fleet and head for London or Paris. On the return flight, she would have the rear seats removed to make room for her purchases" (Harvey, 16 November 2017: 1). After getting married to President Mugabe in 1996, as another report put it:

Grace began regularly commandeering jets from Air Zimbabwe to ferry her around the world on spending sprees, tearing out seats on return flights to accommodate the spoils of her trip. It is estimated that in just a few years in State House, she spent over £200 million on jet fuel alone. She also reportedly owns a private jet once owned by Playboy tycoon Hugh Hefner (Kiapi, 15 July 2009: 1).

In London, she usually stayed at the exclusive Claridge Hotel and did most of her shopping at the Harrods, the famous designer clothing store. She reportedly once spent about £40 000 in a single afternoon in London (Harvey, 16 November 2017; Kiapi, 15 July 2009). During one of her shopping sprees at the Harrods, "she demanded that the departmental store shuts its doors to other customers to enable her to shop in privacy" (Ndebele, 17 November 2017: 1). According to Niall Fraser (16 November 2017: 1), a *South China Morning Post* journalist, Grace's trips abroad "served to indulge an appetite for high-end shopping so voracious it would make former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos blush."

In early 2002, during "one bout of retail therapy" in Paris (Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017: 1), after exploiting loopholes in the European Union travel ban on the Zimbabwean elite that included her (Swain and Sheridan, 15 February 2009), the First Lady allegedly bought jewellery, designer shoes and other valuables worth more than £120 000 in departmental stores (Harvey, 16 November 2017; Martin, 18 November 2017; Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017). At the time of this visit, 7.2 million Zimbabweans were on the verge of starving to death yet the First

Family would retire to their 33-room suite at the Plaza-Athenee in Paris which cost US\$10 000 a night (Harvey, 16 November 2017). During this period, she was also spotted together with Mugabe in “a first-class lounge at Singapore’s International Airport. She had 15 trolley-loads of electronic goods and exotic foods” (Harvey, 16 November 2017: 1).

During a trip to Vietnam in autumn 2006, she bought £55 500 worth of marble statues from Nguyen Hung, a sculptor, for the extravagant mansion she was constructing in Harare (Swain and Sheridan, 15 February 2009). In mid-January 2009, the First Lady made headlines when she attacked Richard Jones, a British photographer, who was taking pictures of her on a lavish spending spree in Hong Kong (Kiapi, 15 July 2009; Towers, 15 November 2017). Jones was left bleeding profusely after Grace “punched him 10 times with a diamond ring-clad fist” (Towers, 15 November 2017: 1). The photographer was assaulted after spotting Grace and her entourage leaving the exclusive Kowloon Shangri-La Hotel in Hong Kong where they had been staying at £2 000 a day. According to the United Kingdom’s *Sunday Times*, Grace was holding a designer Jimmy Choo bag worth an estimated £2 000 (Kiapi, 15 July 2009).

On 19 January 2009, the *South China Morning Post* (cited by Fraser, 16 November 2017: 1) confirmed the incident: “Police are investigating an alleged assault on a newspaper photographer by the wife of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe while she was on a shopping trip to the city.” Grace Mugabe, then 43 years old, was accused of repeatedly punching Richard Jones, the Chief Photographer of the Hong Kong agency, Sinopix, after he took pictures of her shopping on Mody Road in Tsim Sha Tsui (Ibid). Jones and a workmate were on an assignment for Britain’s *Sunday Times*, tracking Grace Mugabe as she left the Kowloon Shangri-La Hotel to go shopping with a bodyguard and a female friend (Ibid). Following the assault, Jones told the *South China Morning Post* that:

They noticed me taking pictures when she was about 150 metres from her hotel and began shouting at me. The bodyguard chased after me. I ran, but I was carrying heavy camera gear, and he caught up with

me after 30 metres and tried to get my camera off me. Then I saw Grace Mugabe coming at me. She launched herself at me, tried to grab my camera and then directed punches at my face. She hit me at least 10 times in the face and head. She was screaming and shouting, and her bodyguard was, too. I was holding on to the camera so I couldn't defend myself (Fraser, 16 November 2017: 1).

Jones reported the assault incident to police two days later, by which time Grace Mugabe and her delegation had left Hong Kong. A report by a medical practitioner indicated that Jones had at least nine marks on his face, mouth and below his mouth and chin, and on both temples. Hong Kong's Department of Justice later issued a statement that Grace Mugabe was entitled to diplomatic immunity as a First Lady and would not be prosecuted for the offence (Fraser, 16 November 2017).

Before embarking on the above-mentioned Hong Kong holiday trip, Grace Mugabe had allegedly withdrawn US\$92 000 from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe in Harare (Kiapi, 15 July 2009). In the company of her children, they flew from Harare and stayed at the Malaysian Island resort of Langkawi (Ibid). From there, they moved to Singapore where the then President Mugabe joined them for a few days (Ibid). While the President stayed in Singapore until 11 January 2009 before flying home, Grace flew to Hong Kong on 9 January and stayed at the expensive Kowloon Shangri-La Hotel where she was joined by Bona, her daughter, who was studying in the city, and several relatives and friends (Ibid). The entourage also included Gideon Gono, the then Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor, who also happened to be a relative of the First Lady (Ibid). During the Hong Kong holiday, the entourage was "usually ferried around in black limousines costing £60 an hour" (Ibid, p.1).

It is apparently ironic that while Hong Kong was one of the First Family's favourite destinations for lavish spending, the Zimbabwean government was always in rental arrears for its consulate in the city. In October 2016, for example, the Zimbabwe consulate in Hong Kong was reportedly being sued by a landlord in the High Court (Fraser, 16 November 2017). In presenting his case, the landlord

stated that the Zimbabwean consulate had failed to pay HK\$610 000 (approximately US\$16 500) in rent (Ibid). Calculations done by statisticians showed that, given Zimbabwe's hyperinflationary environment between 2000 and 2008, the consulate owed the landlord an estimated Z\$781 629 399 580 210 900 000 (Ibid). The lavish spending by the First Family while the country was bleeding illustrates self-centredness and gross insensitivity.

By 2014, Grace Mugabe's annual expenditure on luxury goods was estimated at £2 million (Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017). In 2014 alone, her shopping list included 12 diamond rings, 62 pairs of Ferragamo shoes, 33 pairs made by Gucci and an £80 000 Rolex watch (Ibid). The Central Intelligence Organisation (CIA), a United States Government spy agency, also confirmed that in 2014, the shopaholic Grace Mugabe blew up US\$3 million to buy designer shoes, jewellery and underwear (Johnson, 13 December 2014). Her favourite shoe brand was the Italian design, Ferragamo, whose cheapest pair cost £200 in 2009 (Kiapi, 15 July 2009). At one time when a journalist asked her why she preferred the expensive Ferragamo shoes while many Zimbabweans were languishing in grinding poverty, Grace Mugabe replied: "I have very narrow feet, so I wear only Ferragamo" (Kiapi, 15 July 2009: 1). In September 2017, Grace Mugabe showed off her luxury clothing at the Fashion for Development's Seventh Annual First Ladies Luncheon that was held at The Pierre Hotel in New York (Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017). At the ceremony, she was pictured wearing expensive clothing together with Emine Erdogan, the First Lady of Turkey (Swain and Sheridan, 15 February 2009).

Grace Mugabe was indeed "a shopping animal" (Moyo, 2015: 30). The First Lady's nickname, "Dis-Grace," increasingly became popular across the country because of her shopping sprees which resulted in her putting "an extensive wardrobe featuring, among other baubles, a reported mountain of Salvatore Ferragamo shoes" while many Zimbabweans were in the throes of poverty (Martin, 18 November 2017: 1). In Harare, the Zimbabwean capital, the First Lady was also derisively known as "the first shopper" and "Gucci

Grace” (Harvey, 16 November 2017: 1; Martin, 18 November 2017: 1).

The ageing Robert Mugabe, who was 41 years older, was gradually swayed by his free-spending wife into bouts of extravagance and increasingly became a kleptocrat (Kiapi, 15 July 2009). The nonagenarian ruler increasingly became unpopular among Zimbabweans for hosting expensive birthday parties every year. A celebration in 2014 to mark his 90th birthday, for example, cost more than £600 000 (Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017). This lavish spending was also witnessed later during the same year when Bona, their daughter, wedded in Harare, the Zimbabwean capital. The wedding was attended by 4 000 guests and was hosted by Grace in a 60-acre garden at the First Family’s Borrowdale estate (Martin, 18 November 2017). The function’s expenses reportedly cost £3 million (Robinson and Tweedie, 16 November 2017), which was equivalent to US\$5 million (Martin, 18 November 2017). The caterers for the wedding were hired from Singapore (Ibid). Similarly, in July 2015, Grace Mugabe threw a multi-million dollar bash to mark her 50th birthday during which the seats next to the First Family cost US\$2 000 each (Moyo, 2015).

To further illustrate that Grace Mugabe was indeed “a compulsive shopper” (PDP, 27 January 2017: 1), in mid-2016, for instance, she purchased a US\$1.3 million diamond ring through a Lebanese dealer, Jamal Ahmed, for her 20-year wedding anniversary with Mugabe (Phiri, 11 January 2017). Grace’s lavish expenditure drew the ire of many Zimbabwean Members of Parliament. While contributing in Parliament during the Second Reading Stage of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill on 26 January 2017, Temba Mliswa, the then Independent Member of Parliament for Norton, for example, castigated the First Lady for spending millions of dollars on a diamond ring while the Zimbabwean economy was on its knees with most citizens surviving on only US\$1 per day. He argued:

We must deal with corruption and extravagance in this country by the Executive because we cannot have a First Lady, who orders a

US\$1.5 million ring by externalising foreign currency when there is no money in the country. In my constituency, people have no money and have no access to (medical) drugs and we cannot have an Executive that is corrupt and extravagant, buying very expensive rings when people are suffering... There has got to be financial discipline in terms of expenditure by the Executive and it must be guided by the fact that we do not have enough foreign currency for them to go for luxurious trips (Langa, 27 January 2017: 1).

From December 2016, the First Lady was on a month-long holiday in the Far East where, together with her husband, they reportedly gobbled taxpayers' money amounting to US\$6 million (PDP, 27 January 2017). The vacation saw the couple visiting Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong and China (Phiri, 11 January 2017). During their regular trips to the Far East, the First Family was known to have sought accommodation at luxurious hotels such as the Meritus Mandarin in Singapore, the Shangri-La in Hong Kong and the Inter-Continental in Bangkok where on some occasions, two floors of a hotel were "shut off for their entourage" (Swain and Sheridan, 15 February 2009: 1).

Following in their "mother's footsteps," Grace's children also led lavish lifestyles, much to the chagrin of the majority of Zimbabweans who were living in profound poverty (Martin, 18 November 2017: 1). In late 2017, for example, the 25-year-old Robert Mugabe Jr was spotted putting on "black alligator-leather gold-plate-trimmed Giuseppe Zanotti high-top sneakers, which are not ordinarily available, with a reported cost of some US\$14 000" (Martin, 18 November 2017: 1). In early November 2017, Berlamine Chatunga, the 21-year-old youngest of the first couple's three children, posted a video on the social media "of himself enjoying his own luxury shopping by inexplicably pouring a US\$500 bottle of Armand de Brignac Champagne over his diamond-encrusted watch" (Ibid, p.1). In his own grammar and punctuation, Chatunga's caption accompanying the video clip read: "\$60 000 on the wrist when your daddy run the country ya know!!!" (Ibid, p.1). In September 2017, Russell Goreraza, Grace Mugabe's 33-year-old son by her previous

marriage to Stanley Goreraza (Harvey, 16 November 2017), “was...seen offloading two Rolls Royces that he had air-freighted into the [bankrupt] country” (Ibid, p.1).

Grace became one of the most hated personalities in Zimbabwe because of her “multi-million lavish lifestyle” which clearly illuminated that “her greediness had reached alarming and unacceptable levels” at a time while the majority of Zimbabweans were subsisting on a starvation diet (PDP, 27 January 2017: 1). The extravagant spending of state funds and corrupt activities by his wife largely explain why the then President, Robert Mugabe, failed to deal with corrupt ministers within his cabinet (PDP, 27 January 2017). As Mugabe grew older, he increasingly failed to contain the excesses of his wife, who was four decades younger than him. In 2016, for example, Mugabe was 92 years old while Grace was 51 (Phiri, 11 January 2017).

Grace Mugabe’s messy politics and the downfall of Robert Mugabe

For close to a decade after her marriage to Mugabe, Grace did not exhibit any interest in politics (Sang, 15 November 2017). She, however, entered Zimbabwe’s political landscape in 2014 (Maseko, 6 December 2014). It was from early 2014 that her political ambitions became evident when she began to openly involve herself in the politics of ZANU-PF and the country. Her political career was largely characterised by arrogant tirades which antagonised many sections of the Zimbabwean population.

She made her presidential ambitions known in 2014 at a rally when she said: “They say I want to be president. Why not? Am I not a Zimbabwean?” (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017: 1). From then on, she became “a polarising figure” who saw herself as a potential successor to her 93-year-old husband, Robert, as President” (Ibid, p.1). Within ZANU-PF, she became instrumental in the ousting of several alternative potential successors to Mugabe’s presidency (Ibid). In fact, Grace’s political influence over the ageing President Mugabe, her husband, rose dramatically to the extent that she became “the

power behind the throne” (Ndebele, 17 November 2017: 1). It should be noted that Grace Mugabe’s rise to power and her political machinations largely triggered the end of her husband’s rule in Zimbabwe (Sang, 17 November 2017; Simmons, 15 November 2017).

The First Lady’s thirst for political office, her undue interference in the administrative duties of the Head of State, her influence in the appointment and dismissal of party and government officials, and her support for unpopular policies, can be likened to the machinations of First Ladies such as Marie Antoinette, Imelda Marcos and Asma Al-Assad discussed earlier in this chapter. Her insatiable appetite for political power has also been likened to the shenanigans of Lady Macbeth in William Shakespeare’s tragedy, *Macbeth* (c.1603-1607). Political analysts such as Noa Levin (4 December 2017: 1) gave Grace Mugabe the title: “Zimbabwe’s Lady Macbeth.” In Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth influenced her husband, General Macbeth, to murder King Duncan after which she became the Queen of the Kingdom of Scotland (Busari, 16 November 2017). As was the case with Lady Macbeth who ended up haunted forcing her to commit suicide (Ibid), Grace Mugabe’s conjugal dictatorship with her husband ended disastrously for both of them as will be discussed later in this chapter.

It was through Grace’s influence that in 2014, Joyce Mujuru, the then Vice-President of ZANU-PF and the country was ousted on unsubstantiated allegations of treason and witchcraft. In an effort to gain political gravitas by matching Joyce Mujuru, who was a PhD holder (Moyo, 2015: 11), Grace Mugabe “controversially earned a PhD in Sociology from the University of Zimbabwe in just two months in September 2014, although her thesis, unlike those of other students, was neither filed nor made available. According to Peter Godwin (16 November 2017: 1), this ‘achievement’ “must be the world’s fastest PhD.” Nevertheless, her ‘doctorate’ title (‘Dr *Amai*’ or ‘Dr Mother’) was used on campaign material as she prepared to take over the leadership of the ZANU-PF women’s wing” (BBC News, 21 November 2017: 1).

At the ZANU-PF annual congress of December 2014, she was elected Secretary of the Women's League (Ibid, p.1). With Robert Mugabe as President of the party and his wife as Secretary of the Women's League, the writing was on the wall that a dynasty was in the making. In fact, Grace Mugabe became "the Goddess of ZANU PF and Africa's upcoming First Female Dictator following a bedroom coup which left her in control of the government of Zimbabwe with the ageing dictator, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, even taking instructions from her as well" (Moyo, 2015: 21-22). It was at the 2014 congress that Joyce Mujuru was fired. Addressing the ZANU-PF congress on 4 December 2014, President Mugabe made it clear that the First Lady had exposed Joyce Mujuru's attempt to oust him. However, as Rugare Gumbo, a former ZANU-PF spokesperson, stated that Mugabe had fired Mujuru to advance the political fortunes of his wife (Maseko, 6 December 2014). After Mujuru's expulsion, Emmerson Mnangagwa and Phelekezela Mphoko were appointed two Vice-Presidents of both the ruling party and the country with the latter being a staunch ally of Grace Mugabe (Ibid).

From 2015, in an effort to fulfil her political ambitions of succeeding President Mugabe, Grace used associates from her faction, known as Generation 40 (G40), such as the then Higher Education Minister, Jonathan Moyo, the then ZANU-PF Political Commissar, Saviour Kasukuwere, and the Women's League to denigrate Mnangagwa and his Lacoste Faction. Team Lacoste reportedly enjoyed considerable support from many war veterans and senior military officers (Ndebele, 17 November 2017; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 November 2017).

While many of the G40 kingpins, including Grace Mugabe, were juveniles at independence in 1980, most of the Lacoste leaders had taken part in the liberation struggle. Mnangagwa, for example, has a long liberation war history. In 1963, when the modern ZANU-PF was formed, Mnangagwa was one of the first young party leaders sent to China for military training as part of preparations to wage the armed struggle against colonial rule (*Voice of America*, 15 November 2017). Having returned to the country after undergoing military

training, Mnangagwa led a group of guerrillas known as the Crocodile Gang which blew up several trains. In 1965, at the age of 19 years, Mnangagwa was arrested by the colonial regime and sentenced to death. He escaped the death penalty after his lawyers successfully argued that in accordance with the existing legislation, such a sentence did not apply to persons below 21 years of age (Ibid). He was then sentenced to 10 years in jail during which he was kept at Salisbury Prison, Grey Prison, Khami Prison and Harare Prison (Vambe, 21 November 2017b). While jailed in Salisbury (later renamed Harare), he met and befriended Robert Mugabe (Ibid). After serving his sentence, he was deported to Zambia where he studied law. He kept in touch with Mugabe and was appointed his personal assistant in 1977 after which he became the head of both the civil and military divisions of ZANU-PF during the liberation war (Ma, 24 November 2017; *Voice of America*, 15 November 2017). From independence in 1980, Mnangagwa held various ministerial posts such as National Security; Finance; Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; and Defence (Ma, 24 November 2017; *Voice of America*, 15 November 2017). Many senior Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) officials (most of who had taken part in the liberation struggle), war veterans, ZANU-PF supporters, and several sections of the Zimbabwean population, therefore, viewed the machinations of Grace Mugabe and the G40 members, with the support of Robert Mugabe, as tantamount to undermining the objectives of the liberation struggle and disrespecting those who had taken part in it by creating a Mugabe dynasty, among other things (Ndebele, 17 November 2017).

At the ZANU-PF annual conference in December 2015, President Mugabe openly supported his wife and attacked security officials for meddling in the party's politics. In February 2016, while addressing a rally in the Chiweshe Communal Lands north of Harare, Grace alleged that the military wanted to kill her son, Bellarmine, and bomb her Alpha Omega Dairy Company. During a ZANU-PF rally held in October 2016 at Sakubva Stadium in the City of Mutare, Grace declared that she was not afraid of being shot by Mnangagwa's

allies in the Zimbabwe National Army (Ndebele, 17 November 2017; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 November 2017).

In early 2017, during a rally held in Buhera District, south-east of Harare, she ranted that even if the then 93-year-old President Robert Mugabe died before the 2018 general elections, he would still win votes as a corpse (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017). She said: One day when God decides that Mugabe dies, we will have his corpse appear as a candidate on the ballot paper. You will see people voting for Mugabe as a corpse. I am seriously telling you - just to show people how people love their president (Ibid, p.1). She also warned Robert Mugabe's contemporaries during Zimbabwe's liberation war that won independence in 1980 that it was not automatic that one of them would succeed him. In a veiled attack on Mnangagwa, she made her ambitions of succeeding her husband known by declaring that: "Anyone who was with Mugabe in 1980 has no right to tell him he is old. If you want Mugabe to go, then you leave together. You also have to leave. Then we take over because we were not there in 1980" (Ibid, p.1).

Grace's anti-Mnangagwa tirade escalated as the ruling party's December 2017 extraordinary congress drew closer (Ndebele, 17 November 2017; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 November 2017). On 4 October 2017, while addressing delegates during the launch of the Empowerment Bank in which Bona, her daughter, was one of its directors, she waged a verbal onslaught on Mnangagwa:

I am the First Lady and Mnangagwa is nobody. He was employed by my husband... Who is he? I am the wife of a President. When you go around saying all nonsensical stuff, it means you have failed the politics. You need to stay home. There are some people who think they were the only ones who fought during the war. You can't like the President and hate his wife. It is impossible (*Zimbabwe Mail*, 5 October 2017: 1).

While addressing thousands of Apostolic Sect members during her 'Super Sunday Rally' held at Rufaro Stadium in Harare on 5 November 2017, Grace accused Mnangagwa of plotting President

Mugabe's downfall. She added that Mnangagwa had to be fired from the Vice-Presidency of ZANU-PF and the country before the ruling party's extraordinary congress scheduled later during the year in December (Chidza, 6 November 2017). She ranted:

I moved to stop the issue of youths being expelled from the party and demanded that we deal with the head of factionalism. A snake is better dealt with by crushing the head. His head must be crushed. I have said I will personally make sure disciplinary procedures are followed to deal with Mnangagwa even if everyone in the party is scared. I will not be intimidated...He hates the President. Trouble causers in the party must go before the next congress. He (Mnangagwa) must be dropped before we meet at congress in order for us to have unity in the party. Those accused of pushing a Lacoste agenda in the Women's League are dead... All youths associated with Lacoste are gone (Chidza, 6 November 2017: 1).

Grace went on to inform the Apostolic Sect members about her presidential ambitions:

He (Mnangagwa) probably hates me for demanding the woman's quota (in the ZANU-PF presidium) but it is more than that. Even without the constitutional changes he can still be dropped and someone appointed in his stead just like we saw a few weeks ago with the Cabinet changes. It was a mistake to change the constitution and allow Mnangagwa to be appointed. It will never happen again. I am so good at what I do, I can say it myself. Give me the job and I will do it very well because I am good. I can do a great job. There is nothing wrong because we will be following in Mnangagwa's footsteps. He left a constituency (Chirumanzu-Zibagwe) to his wife. So I have said the President you can also leave me in charge. You can also give me your position. We will just be copying from Mnangagwa (Ibid, p.1).

It is quite apparent from these pronouncements that the First Lady "had usurped the powers of the President although she was just a wife" (Mudadigwa, 12 December 2017: 1). The ageing President

Mugabe walked the talk of his young wife and went on to accuse Mnangagwa of disloyalty. While addressing a presidential youth interface rally held in Bulawayo on 4 November 2017, the then President Mugabe accused Mnangagwa of mobilising youths to boo the First Lady as she delivered her speech:

I didn't know that some people had sent emissaries to boo the First Lady during her speech. *Mai* (Mrs) Mugabe speaks the truth from her heart. But what surprises me is that why are we being attacked in the name of Vice-President Mnangagwa? Was I wrong in appointing Vice-President Mnangagwa? If I was wrong, I can make him fall by end of day tomorrow. I don't like that. Regardless of who that person is, we don't care. They would rather form their own party and leave us. If things continue as they are, we are going to a congress where we will deliberate on such issues and make binding decisions (Vambe, 5 November 2017a: 1).

Given the conjugal dictatorship that had taken root within the First Family, it was not surprising that on 6 November 2017, Robert Mugabe axed Mnangagwa from government for allegedly “consistently and persistently exhibiting traits of disloyalty, disrespect, deceitfulness and unreliability” (*Newsday*, 7 November 2017: 1). Fearing for his life, Mnangagwa went into self-imposed exile to South Africa on 7 November 2017 but vowed to come back (*Daily News*, 9 November 2017). As he fled into exile Mnangagwa issued a statement that delivered a strong warning to Robert Mugabe about the privatisation of ZANU-PF by the First Family and the G40 cabal:

It is sad and deplorable that you (Mugabe) have allowed our party to be hijacked by novices and external forces as well as individuals who have a proven record of treachery. This party is not personal property for you and your wife to do as you please. Now that you have clearly told the world that I am your enemy who has taken in excess of 50 years to formulate a plan to dispose of you, I now urge all the genuine members of the party to determine for themselves who between the three of us including your wife and the notorious G40 boys is the

enemy of the party, and who the real culprit is in destroying our beloved ZANU-PF. I stand prepared, once again, to pay the ultimate price in defence of Zimbabwe. I am not afraid of anyone or worried about my political future under the current 'Party Capture' that is being tolerated and condoned by the First Family (*Daily News*, 9 November 2017: 1).

Soon after Mnangagwa's expulsion, the G40 Faction overhauled the ruling party's provincial structures and influenced them to unanimously declare that they wanted Grace Mugabe to take over the Vice-Presidency at the party's extraordinary congress to be held in December 2017. On 13 November 2017, General Constantino Chiwenga, the then ZDF Commander, cautioned Mugabe and obliged him to stop the purges of Lacoste supporters from the provincial structures ahead of the December congress. Chiwenga warned that the army could step in to thwart any possible threats to national security. In his remarks, believed to be directed at the First Lady, Chiwenga also warned politicians to stop recklessly vilifying the military (Ndebele, 17 November 2017).

In his reaction to Chiwenga's remarks, Kudzanayi Chipanga, the then ZANU-PF Youth League Secretary and key member of the G40 Faction, hastily convened a press conference where he accused senior army officials of looting the country's diamonds. Simon Khaya Moyo, the then ZANU-PF spokesperson, weighed in and issued a statement alleging that Chiwenga's sentiments were tantamount to treason (Ndebele, 17 November 2017; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 November 2017).

These events, which clearly showed that the First Family, with the support of the G40 Faction, was intent on having a Mugabe dynasty for Zimbabwe, undermined the legitimacy of both President Mugabe and the First Lady in the eyes of many Zimbabweans (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017). During the night of 14 November 2017 and the morning of the following day, a military intervention saw the Zimbabwe National Army seizing state television and placing the First Family under house arrest (*BBC News*, 21 November 2017; Ndebele, 17 November 2017). Some of Grace's key allies were arrested while others went into hiding (Ndebele, 17 November 2017).

Mugabe resigned on 21 November 2017 as the Zimbabwean Parliament was meeting to impeach him (Levin, 4 December 2017). With the ousting of Mugabe, the 75-year-old Mnangagwa was sworn in as Zimbabwe's President on 24 November 2017, officially ending Robert Mugabe's 37-year rule (Ma, 24 November 2017).

It is quite apparent that while Grace Mugabe had long become unpopular with many Zimbabweans because of her extra-marital affair with Mugabe prior to their marriage, tendencies for personal aggrandisement and lavish lifestyle, her political gambles precipitated the downfall of herself and her husband. In his presentation to the Southern African Political and Economic Supplement (SAPES) policy dialogue forum on 30 November 2017, Christopher Mutsvangwa, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) stated that the alleged military intervention which forced the then President Robert Mugabe to step down was a "counter coup" to former First Lady's (Grace's) "bedroom coup" (*New Zimbabwe*, 1 December 2017: 1). He argued:

There was no coup. There was a counter-coup. The coup was carried out by Grace when her senior husband was losing his faculties and sleeping all the time. She just uses a marriage certificate to get her cohorts at State House to start running this government. I saw it in cabinet, I told you. So, I am not talking about some detached observation from somebody who was outside. I was in the politburo; I was in cabinet. Grace, a mad woman with no brains, was in charge of the country on behalf of her cohorts and we are revolutionaries; we don't carry out any coups. We protect what the people want and that's what we did and if there is anybody who has issues with that, you try to form your own army (Ibid, p.1).

Alex Magaisa, a Lecturer of Law at Kent University in England, cited by Ndebele (17 November 2017: 1), aptly summarised the suicidal role played by Grace Mugabe in the downfall of herself and her husband:

The last straw for most people within and outside ZANU-PF was the increasingly evident possibility that Mugabe's wife, Grace, was well on course to succeed him. That would have created a Mugabe dynasty. Many found the idea of a Mugabe dynasty extremely repulsive. There might have been a residue of sympathy for Mugabe, but many were repulsed by Grace's brand of politics. She was brash and condescending, with a penchant for humiliating adults in public. Many dreaded the prospect of her presidency.

Guy Martin (18 November 2017: 1) concurred: "It was symbiotic self-destruction on a Shakespearean level: Grace Mugabe was an extreme political liability that Robert Mugabe, in his dotage, did not realise that he could not carry. Her fiery political ambition to succeed him, the ultimate luxury she could not attain, did them both in." Shadreck Gutto, the Director of the Centre for African Renaissance Studies at the University of South Africa, also reiterated: "The crisis has been triggered by Grace because she wanted to grab power and to have Mugabe remove a lot of people. She overreached herself. She has done a lot to accelerate the removal of her husband from power. The military decided that enough is enough" (Njikizana, 17 November 2017: 1).

As was the case with First Ladies such as Marie Antoinette and Imelda Marcos, Grace Mugabe swayed her husband to administer the ruling ZANU-PF party and the Zimbabwean state from the bedroom. As a conjugal dictatorship took shape within the First Family, pessimism about Zimbabwe's political future became a reality. Given Mugabe's advanced age, the First Lady's word was most likely going to carry the day over the constitutional provisions of the ruling party and the country. Since political space was now being monopolised by the First Family, Grace Mugabe's hurdles towards the Vice-Presidency were cleared by the firing of Mnangagwa and it was only a matter of time before she succeeded her nonagenarian husband as President of Zimbabwe. Having endured years of socio-economic hardships and political turmoil, many Zimbabweans became agitated as democratic space increasingly shrunk. This largely explains why the intervention of the

ZDF and the ascendancy of Mnangagwa to the presidency enjoyed popular support.

Conclusion

This chapter has articulated how First Lady Grace Mugabe contributed in the downfall of her husband in November 2017. Grace's excesses made many Zimbabweans to hate her much more than her dictatorial husband. Her reputation had for long become fragile because of her extravagant lifestyle and political machinations characterised by inflammatory tirades and hate speech, among other things. With the firing of Mnangagwa as Vice-President in early November 2017, it became evident that Grace Mugabe was heading for the Vice-Presidency at the ZANU-PF congress within a few weeks in December and the presidency in the very near future given that Mugabe was now 93 years old. When the army intervened to scuttle these pseudo-dynastic plans in November 2017, the First Family had very few sympathisers within ZANU-PF and the country at large, mainly because of Grace's political blunders, personal aggrandisement and unpatriotic extravagance.

Above all, the chapter has illuminated how some women, directly or indirectly, seem to endorse their subordinate status in politics by consenting to the perpetuation of patriarchal hegemonic dispensations in an effort to manipulate influential men to facilitate their elevation up the political ladder and enable them to gain access to material resources ahead of other citizens. Grace Mugabe is a typical example of a First Lady who sought to exploit her husband's powerful position as President of Zimbabwe to gate-crash into the ZANU-PF executive, which was a critical stepping stone to fulfilling her ambitions of succeeding him and accumulating more wealth. The chapter has also illustrated that attempts by First Ladies to privatise statecraft within First Families have the potential of antagonising many sections of the population. Such machinations by Grace Mugabe, as was the case with First Ladies such as Marie Antoinette and Imelda Marcos before her, contributed to the downfall of her husband in addition to shattering her political ambitions.

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Mugabeism and the Struggle against Western Imperialism: Land Reform, Restitution and Post and (neo-) Coloniality Discourses in Zimbabwe

Munoda Mararike & Oliver Mtshuri

Introduction

The Berlin Colonial Conference of 1884-1885 marked long dark days for the Scramble for Africa, in what was known as the new world order. It was about colonial domination, subjugation, exploitation of mineral and exploitative extraction of natural resources. Western Europe became principal beneficiaries of the newly 'discovered' wealth – pillaging and looting to their countries through exploitation, false pretences, deception and outright theft. The insidious process was complemented by subjective constructs of political, social, religious and cultural domination of indigenous populations or 'natives' as imperialism defined them in an unbalanced and parasitic framework of socio-economic relationships.

It is in this light that pronouncements like subjugation, suppression, cultural genocide, expropriation and repression have been touted by historians to panoply and imbricate the depth and intensity of colonialism. The Chapter interrogates the 'Janus face' of Western decoloniality efforts - with specific reference to Zimbabwe's ferocious battles for reclamation and restitution of its land. We examine instruments of repression including statutes like the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), which were designed to preserve the status quo. In our analytical narratives, we foreground how the irredentist regime of colonial Rhodesia, with the blessings of Britain, tried to prevent majority rule in Zimbabwe - for their own selfish and hegemonic interests. As such, one of the foci of this chapter is to establish the origins of demonisation of Robert Mugabe and Zimbabwe (Miles-Tendi, 2014) and propound Mugabeism

(Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009) in the land political discourses of Zimbabwe. Figurative diction of Mugabeism as a doctrine and seminal creed of liberation struggles of Africa help to expose an array of imperialist machinations orchestrated by Western Europe and North America.

We argue in this chapter that in Mugabeism emerges forces and an impetus that beckons to fight a coloniality mentality or mind-set in all formerly colonised territories – and these forces must be dismembered from the body of imperialism through consciousness and land reforms and repossession.

Historical Foundations of the struggles

Zimbabwe's post-independence land reform revolution the "Third Chimurenga" took off in 2000 against the background of the new millennium replication of the scramble for Africa. What had preceded the Third Chimurenga was the enactment of a deeply flawed Lancaster House Constitution of 1979 by the British legitimising Zimbabwean independence in 1980¹⁰ as shall be explicated in this chapter. The root of this war was, therefore, anchored on the Lancaster House Agreement (hereinafter, the Agreement) of 1979, which gave a caesarean birth of the new nation in 1980¹¹ (Moyo and Yeros, 2009).

Viewed from one angle, the Agreement was an attempt to dilute the benefits and reverse gains of the Zimbabwean Liberation struggle¹² (Hatchard, Raftopoulos, 2006). From another angle, it was designed to protect and protract 'white' hegemony in Zimbabwe at the expense of 'black' Nationalism and renaissance. The Agreement turned out largely to be an affront to the armed struggle which was waged on the premise of total liberation of the black majority from

¹⁰ J Hatchard, 'The constitution of Zimbabwe: towards a model for Africa'. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021-8553000008378>/Accessed 13 Feb 2017

¹¹ Moyo, S. & Yeros, P. (2007) 'The radicalised state: Zimbabwe's interrupted revolution', *Review of African Political Economy*, 111, 106 - 125.

¹² Raftopoulos, B. (2006) 'The Zimbabwean crisis and challenges of the Left', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, **32 (2)**: 203 – 221.

colonial oppression and a promise to reclaim land which was forcibly appropriated during the colonial era.

It was a nihilistic quest by whites for control over vast tracts of land and the mineral resources found in the country. Such strategies were designed to turn Zimbabwe into a backyard of white monopoly capital undergirded by imperialism¹³ (Mararike, 2003) As such, in pursuit of social and academic justice, Zimbabwe's decoloniality cannot be discussed adequately outside the context of the social forces at play at three historical epochs, the history, coloniality and decolonization as part of anti-imperialism. These depredations and banalities of colonialism in Zimbabwe are also reflected in the First and Second Chimurenga land struggles dating back to the illegal occupation of Rhodesia by the British Pioneer Column in 1896.

In "Decolonisation and the Question of Subjectivity," Freya Schiwy (2007)¹⁴ notes that decoloniality is a component of power struggles and domination by arguing that "decolonisation is an inseparable part of the casting of subjectivity through coloniality of power". Yet, the colonial construct of Rhodesia was a brutal vision of exploitation of man by man. Rhodesia was a vast concentration of resources under the control of and for the benefit of a minority representing the British Empire.

Europe has ensured that the process of setting up structural weaknesses and fault lines continues, for example – by creating shortcomings in the constitution-making processes. The process has continued to spill into the African "independence" space as a new form of neo-colonialism where former colonial masters demand constitutional reforms. Some African leaders view this as 'meddling' or 'gross interference' into issues of domestic governance. The fact that it has also taken longer for African governments to discover historical obstacles has meant that Europe emerged as the principal

¹³ C Mararike, 'West making fortunes from plundered African resources'. Available at <https://www.mail-archive.com/ugandanet@kymnet/msg01362.html/> Accessed 7 Feb 2017

¹⁴ Schiwy, F. (2007) Decolonisation and the question of subjectivity'. *Cultural Studies*, **21**(2-3): 271-294.

beneficiary of land and mineral deals that were (mis-) negotiated at independence.

According to Nelson Maldonado Torres (2007: 2-3), coloniality refers to “long standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but [also] defines culture, labour, inter-subjective relations and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations.”¹⁵ The Agreement was part of history of coloniality in Zimbabwe because it sought to preserve the unencumbered power and status quo of Rhodesia by protecting ‘white owned land’ which had been forcibly taken away from the Africans in the 1890s.

One of the constitutional conditions of the Agreement was that whites who owned land were not obliged to sell their land to the state for purposes of resettling landless Zimbabwean population. Under the Lancaster House Agreement, there were sweeping provisions under Section C “Declaration of Rights”, sub-section (v) (I) that protected white interests, for example, they were not compelled to register “no interest” in land which was excess to their requirements. Because of the said constitutional provisions, white land owners sold land when they felt like and were not in any way obligated to give up their land. Under the provisions in the Agreement, whites were protected under the Lancaster House Constitution from 1980 to 1990. Furthermore, the constitution contained the infamous clause “willing buyer willing seller”. These legislative provisions were based on voluntary actions and not on principles of equitable distribution of land to landless black peasants and those of social justice and redress. This made it even harder for the Robert Mugabe’s government to justify to the electorate of glaringly disproportionate land distribution in favour of European settler farmers.

The principle of willing buyer willing seller is ambivalent to redistribution, social justice and restoration. In other words, willing buyer willing seller did not address the above issues of restoration, restitution and social justice. This was because willing buyer, willing seller was purveyed as arm’s length transactions while camouflaging

¹⁵ Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007) ‘On the coloniality of being’, *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3): 240-270.

the intent to preserve white supremacy and the ill-gotten gains which colonialism brought. In circumstances of ‘Willing buyers and Unwilling sellers’, reclamation became an imperative if the land was to return to its rightful owners in the current epoch and to assuage and appease the likes of Mbuya Nehanda who had foretold its inevitable return. Reclamation, which would also ensure redistribution, social justice and restoration is an antithesis to white conquest, white hegemony, white oppression and white supremacy as Mugabeism would contend¹⁶. One of the cardinal principles of Mugabeism¹⁷ is resistance. When western governments called upon Robert Mugabe to step down after two terms of office in 1990, he resisted – citing the fact that he was under pressure from his electorate to address the land question. For Mugabe, the liberation wars were about reclaiming land which he believed had been stolen by imperialists. He then continued to dig in up to 2017– demanding that Britain should pay for compensation for the land which their kith and kin stole from the indigenous people. We see Mugabeism at work as he engaged in coruscating land restitution debates at the United Nations. The formation of the opposition MDC provided a formidable and unprecedented challenge for Mugabe in what was at one stage a one party state democracy which herald changing times.

Liberation Struggle movements and Land Question in Zimbabwe

Southern African transformational politics of land have been born out of wars of liberation executed by liberation movements. Philosophical perspectives from Tanzania’s Chama Chamapinduzi (CCM), Kenya African National Union (KANU), Zambia’s United Independence Party (UNIP), Malawi Congress Party (MCP),

¹⁶ Miles-Tendi, B. (2014) ‘The origins and functions of demonization discourse in Britain-Zimbabwe Relations (2000-), Journal of Southern African Studies, **40(6)**: 1251-1269, DOI: 10. 1080/0305707070.2014.933646.

¹⁷ Ndhlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2009) ‘Making sense of Mugabeism in Local and Global Politics: ‘So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe’. *Third World Quarterly*, **30(6)**: 1139-1158, DOI: 1080/-1436590903037424.

Mozambique's Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola (MPLA), South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), Zimbabwe National People's Union (ZAPU) and South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) – made the land question in Southern Africa a rallying point of their armed struggles.

There is substantial evidence that suggests that the existence of liberation movements in Southern Africa created a growing buffer or a “cold war front” that obstructed Europe from further exploiting the mineral and land resources of the region (Alexander, *et al.*, 2017). Such historical linkages and developments have a significant bearing on how former colonies in Southern Africa reacted to the forces of neo-colonialism and other forces in the face of a European onslaught.

Lancaster House Constitution a thesis of Coloniality?

According to cultural studies cited by Maldonado-Tores (2007), coloniality, a concept of decolonialisation is rearticulated by scholars such as Mignolo (2003), who addresses the question of “the Being”. The concept of coloniality is based on colonial relations not only in the areas of authority, sexuality, knowledge and the economy, but extends to the general understanding of collective belonging.

Maldonado Tores (2007) further notes that while the coloniality of power refers to the interrelation among modern forms of exploitation and domination (power), the coloniality of knowledge dealt with the impact of colonisation on the different areas of knowledge production, coloniality of being would make primary reference to the lived experience of colonisation and its impact on language¹⁸ (Lander, 2000). In defining coloniality, Maldonado-Tores makes what Marariki (2003) calls “a difference without distinction”¹⁹ by arguing that:

¹⁸ The idea of the coloniality of knowledge (‘colonialidad del saber’) becomes the organizing theme of Edgardo Lander (2000).

¹⁹ Marariki, C. ‘Zimbabwe won’t allow West to destroy Economy’.

Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism²⁰.

Like most colonies in Africa in the 60s to the 80s, Zimbabwe went through a decoloniality phase, a period in which citizens recognised the need to liberate themselves through consciousness and armed struggle. The era of consciousness is closely linked to social forces, socio-economic conditions and demands for self-rule and self-determination. Decolonisation denotes the process of transfer of formal political authority to indigenous rulers. It involves managing conflict in the negotiating terms of reference. Decolonisation is also – in part – a bargaining process through which parties seek to achieve redress. We discuss this aspect in greater detail in a subsequent section.

For Zimbabwe, the Lancaster House Conference was part of the package of the empire. This was important for two reasons, first it was clear that the Mugabe-led ZANLA and Nkomo-led ZIPRA guerrilla movements were inflicting colossal damages to the fractious and sanctions-ridden Rhodesian economy. Ian Smith's Rhodesia was struggling with sanctions and isolation and Britain as a colonial master was increasingly under pressure to put pressure on Rhodesia to grant majority rule. Second, the conference represented an adaptive and pre-emptive process of integrating warring nationalist parties of ZANU-PF and ZAPU into structures designed to perpetuate neo-colonialism. It was a known factor that these two liberation movements were formulated along ethnic lines however

Available at <https://www.mail-archive.com/ugandanet@kym.net/msg02641.html/> Accessed 07/03/2017

²⁰ Freya Schiwy 'Decolonization and the Question of Subjectivity', *Cultural Studies*, **21:2-3**, 271-294 (2007)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162555>

with a common enemy – the Rhodesian government. Before they went into Lancaster House negotiations, the split between the two movements was evident as they wanted separate representations. Patriotic Front was then formed as a united front of the two warring factions of the liberation struggle movements.

Scholarship on decolonialisation process confirm that constitutional bargaining had overtures of both psychological and political pressure:

...de-colonialisation is adaptive in that the colonial political elites must seek new kinds of influence in altered political authority structures...they must identify with the new rulers [and] it is cooptive (sic) in that it aims to socialise the new elite into colonial, political economic and social patterns....decolonialisation is pre-emptive in that it is initiated largely to prevent formation and mobilisation of mass nationalist base...fear of widespread violence and uprising as cause and threat to decolonialisation... (Wasserman, 1973: 104).

The Lancaster House Chapter was one such instrument that was necessary in what Alexander *et al.*, (2017) termed ‘transnational historical transformation’ of Rhodesia to Zimbabwe even if it was working in synchrony to preserve the status quo of Rhodesia. That strategy also worked well for the colonial establishment in that it diluted and slowed the consolidation of majority rule and power in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, delays or postponement of power eliminated what Mignolo (2009) would term as ‘epistemic disobedience’ especially in the first decade of independence (1980-1990) when the land question was protected. Tentacles of empire – logics and technologies of governance - still permeated post-colonial, imperial structures and because of their virtual and insidious character, you feel free when you are not free. That freedom, first and foremost, must be mental. In other words, this meant that black Africans needed to free themselves first from mental slavery for total emancipation to be attained. Mental enslavement is a condition in which blacks feel inferior to other beings and hate themselves.

Dealing with Neo- and de- coloniality in post-independence Zimbabwe

It is necessary to deconstruct terms of reference of the Lancaster House Constitution that was signed on 22 November 1979. Annex B of the Preamble expressed that the Patriotic Front was deeply conscious of the need to bring an end to racism and colonialism. It is decoloniality contradictions “which continued to plague the people of Zimbabwe”. Britain, had conveniently dithered on the question of guaranteeing Zimbabwean independence by avoiding facilitating a majority government. In 1979, it finally laid a remit for Zimbabwean self-rule by agreeing to host the Lancaster House Conference.

Annex C, Summary of the Independence Constitution, under Section C (Declaration of Rights), under subheading “Freedom from Deprivation of Poverty”, sub-section 1 stipulated that:

Every person will be protected from having his property compulsorily acquired except when the acquisition is in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality, public health, town and country planning, the development or utilisation of that or other property in such a manner as to promote the public benefit or, in the case of under- utilised land, settlement of land for agricultural purposes. When property is wanted for one of these purposes, its acquisition will be lawful only on condition that the law provides for the prompt payment of adequate compensation and, where the acquisition is contested, that a court order is obtained. A person whose property is so acquired will be guaranteed the right of access to the High Court to determine the amount of compensation...

Terms and conditions continue under Declaration of rights, C, Section (v) (3):

Compensation paid in respect of loss of land to anyone who is a citizen of or ordinarily resident in Zimbabwe (or to a company the majority of whose shareholders are such persons) will, within a

reasonable time, be remittal to any country outside Zimbabwe, free from any deduction, tax or charge in respect of its remission...

The clauses were designed to protect white interest in perpetuity, to safeguard the transmission of money to safe havens as well as ensure continued white dominance. The British government had devised a strategy of protecting their interests by focussing on property rights than equitable distribution of property including land reform programme. The question of compensation for land on favourable and legal terms was a guideline for looking after their kith and kin as opposed to alleviating the plight of the so-called terrorists (our freedom fighters) and their people. In addition, the “willing seller willing buyer clause” was an orchestration designed to perpetuate white hegemonic interests.

As highlighted by Miles-Tendi (2014) it is evident that that the British made a *viva voce* arrangement at Lancaster House to pay compensation for land procured for resettlement. The British Government by refusing to explicitly commit in writing to provide funds for buying land from European settler farmers in the Zimbabwe was evidence of negotiation in bad faith and a deliberate ploy to undermine political processes.

Why should this surprise us? Wind back to 1960 and link with what Wasserman (2008: 99) terms ‘the other side – the political bargaining by British colonial elite’ who adapted ‘a potential threatening process of decolonisation’ at the same venue for the first Lancaster House Conference of February 1960 as they negotiated Kenya’s independence with Kenya African National Union (KANU). British negotiating tactics in the political transition is lucidly captured by Wasserman (2008: 101):

The tactics used by the European groupings [and the British] tended to be different according to their respective definitions of threat and goals to be achieved. A favoured liberal tactic was to try to trade constitutional advance for economic concessions, a tactic playing in conjunction with the colonial government. At the first Lancaster House Conference when they demanded ‘safeguards’ on land; at the

Governor's conference in autumn of 1961, at the Second Lancaster House and throughout the period of informal bargaining, the attempt was made to guarantee property rights and a large farm system by threatening to push back independence because of failure to reach agreement... (Wasserman, 2008: 101)²¹

The above instalment is clearest evidence that The British colonial masters had used threats, blackmail and deception in their negotiation tactics in the past and at Lancaster House Conference in 1979. We submit that this was a deliberate ploy intended to negate the rule of constitutional law and to undermine the due process of the law. We also state that negotiating in bad faith, refusing to cooperate or commit certain terms to writing was part of the strategy intended to lay foundations of neo-colonialism and its entrenchment.

The question of reclamation, restitution and resolution cannot be analysed conclusively without a historical brevity and intellectual acuity. Zimbabwe's decolonisation is part of the wider and gigantic imperialist agenda that swept through Europe in the late 18th century. The German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck presided over *The Kongokonferenz* of 1884 to 1885, better known as the Berlin Colonial Conference. The words 'scramble' or 'partition' are very significant in that they imply both a rush and a shortage of resources. In other words, European countries were rushing for scarce resources in their division of the African continent with disrespect, disdain, contempt and without shame.

This was followed by the illegal occupation of Zimbabwe in 1890 via the agency of British South Africa Company (BSAP) led by Cecil John Rhodes. King Lobengula was forced to sign three Treaties – The Grobler Treaty (July 1887), Moffatt Treaty (February 1888) and Rudd Concession (March 1888) after which the Queen of England granted Cecil Rhodes a Royal Charter in October 1889 for the exclusive mining rights for gold which had been 'discovered' in 1867 in Matabeleland. The Royal Charter represents a means or form of accumulation by theft and dispossession. We must also note that

²¹ Wasserman, G. (1973) 'The Independence Bargain: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue 1960-1962' *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 11(2): 99-120.

exploiting mineral ore resources would enable Britain to consolidate its Royal Charter status in Rhodesia as its colony.

The arrival of the BSAC's invasion force, the "Pioneer Column" on 12 September 1890 at Fort Salisbury (now Harare) effectively sealed the deal for colonial occupation of Zimbabwe. Raising the British flag meant full and effective control of Rhodesia as a colony by the British. Raising the flag conferred domination and control which were aspects of colonial subjugation. Based on the foregoing, scholars like Mararike (2018:191) seek to "underpin colonialism as a phenomenon of consciousness...which explores belief systems, culture and ethics..." It is a process or a condition subjected to weaker human beings by stronger ones. It is part of the coloniality of being which is often used as an identity tag and decolonisation processes. It is also a question perceived with subjectivity in colonial space. At one other level, coloniality is characterised by patterns of power based on inequality. For example, scholars like Van Onselen state that 'power' is translated to inter-subjective relations of labour and productivity which he routinely referred to as "Chibharo" or forced labour. Between 1991 and 1895 'Natives Reserves' for Africans were created to enable full control of the country through establishment of administrative districts. These districts, later known as 'Tribal Trust Lands' were created marking the beginning of racial segregation and forced removals of families off their land. The Land Apportionment Act of 1931 supports this claim.

In 1893, the first rebellion known as Anglo-Ndebele War took place in protest of white occupancy and racially motivated removals of indigenous groups off their land. This was followed by the First Chimurenga of 1896-97 where indigenous people were defeated by the military might of the settlers which was undergirded by guns. According to Beach (1986) after the British raised their flag in Zimbabwe, what followed was the passage of a raft of repressive legislative instruments designed to consolidate white colonial rule in Rhodesia also undergirded by guns.

Colonial Rhodesia was a depiction of oppressive political, labour and social relations some of which is depicted in the "Master/Servant" dialect which contributes to the ontology of

coloniality and racism. According to Fanon (2008) such relationships draw on extreme expressions of coloniality in relation to racial subjectivity. Unbalanced and oppressive relations are part of the characteristics and political adjuncts that British imperialism exhibited in their rabid colonial agenda in Zimbabwe.

Mugabeism and the Struggle for Land

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 1144):

...Mugabeism is a summation of a constellation of political controversies, political behaviour, political ideas, utterances, rhetoric and actions that have crystallised around Mugabe's political life. It is a contested phenomenon with the nationalist aligned scholars understanding it as a pan-African redemptive ideology opposed to all forms of imperialism and colonialism and dedicated to a radical redistributive project predicated on redress of colonial injustices. A neoliberal-inspired perspective sees Mugabeism as a form of racial chauvinism and authoritarianism marked by antipathy towards norms of liberal governance...

In view of Ndlovu-Gatsheni's understanding above, we define Mugabeism as pan-Africanist anti-colonial rhetoric backed by action for redistributive justice in pursuit of the restoration of result (land). The Third Chimurenga posits Mugabeism as a post-African coloniality doctrine centred on declaration of total independence and empowerment of Africans in consolidating their self-determination. Mugabeism has its roots in transitional politics of liberation movements, and demonization discourses resonating as anti-imperialistic in nature. It counters the stratification of neo-colonialist agendas as it unpacks the question of exploitation of man by man and questions neo-capitalist practices as defined in post-modernist globalisation politics. The formation of African National Congress in 1963 gave birth to Mugabeism as a doctrine that defines the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. When Mugabe rose to the helm of the Zimbabwe African National Union in 1975, he shaped the ideological

framework of the party to reflect liberation ethos based on the barrel of the gun.

Mugabeism as a Doctrine

The doctrine relies on counter-intelligence against western propaganda machinery, confrontational politics, abstract reasoning and seminal production of knowledge in the context of Third Chimurenga liberation politics. This is popularly known as “Hondo Yeminda” (The Struggle for Land) in Zimbabwe. Mugabeism is also centred on land reform and equitable distribution of land which was stolen from indigenous people, the Africans by Caucasians after the Berlin Colonial Conference of 1884. It is, therefore, correct to point out that Mugabeism is a doctrine borne out of post-modernism in pan- African politics. Apart from Robert Mugabe, no other African leader has taken “independence” beyond ‘political freedom’ to the battlefield of equitable distribution of land to people. Mugabeism is about translating theoretical frameworks and political rites of passage into practice - beyond Albert Luthuli’s 1952 Freedom Charter, Part 4 “land shall be owned among those who till on it”,

To understand theoretical constructs of Mugabeism, it is important to reposition socio- economic conditions and history of poverty in post-independence Africa as symptoms of colonialism and its perpetuation in virtual ways. Productivity of land can be increased by bringing factors of production into use including optimal productivity through what is called “nhimbe” in local Zimbabwean Shona language - a form of collective agriculture support group that helped to boost production during in the pre-colonial era. According to the Mugabeism doctrine, land ownership is the final stage of the war of land restitution through reclamation – what was called by Mugabe’s war veterans, “Hondo Yeminda”. It is at this stage of the “war” that the state must support land reforms by enacting supporting constitutional and legislative provisions to safeguard it from neo-colonial machinations including backdoor or illegal sales of land. ZANU-PF Information and Publicity Department published

Inside Chimurenga (2000) as a guiding publication to the 2001 Third Chimurenga Land reform programme.

Mugabeism is also interconnected to empowering communities through land reform and affirmative action as a way to dealing with so-called poverty. It is so-called poverty because it was induced by land dispossession during the colonial period. Fiegehen, Lansley and Smith (1983) define poverty as the “insufficiency of basic needs” or being in a state of “insufficiency of earnings [to] obtain minimum necessities for maintenance of merely physical efficiency” (Townsend 2001). The World Bank (2002) considers poverty as a state “of not having enough today in some dimension of well-being”. The concept of poverty has many facets including dual labour market radical theories, sub-culture of poverty, Marxist perspectives, Functionalist explanations of inequality and poverty and, of course, Foucault’s power relations in the context of poverty and human action (Zdravomyslov 1986).

This Chapter unpacks a historicity of tensions between Britain-Zimbabwe relations to unmask their origins. It highlights colonial and nationalist formations as shapers of post-independence conflict between the two countries. Relationships define sovereignty and governance from the pan-Africanist and decoloniality agenda. It can be argued that what escalated the Third Chimurenga is the election of Tony Blair’s Labour government to power in 1997 (Mugabe, 2001). One of the key foreign policy projects of the New Labour Government was assigned to International Development Secretary, Claire Short, and the inception of the new government. Before we put Claire Short’s pronouncements into their historical and situational contexts, it is essential to trace the difficult political relations between Harold Wilson’s Labour government and the southern African liberation movements who supported the emancipation and liberation of Zimbabwe.

The relationship between African National Congress and the Harold Wilson Labour government of the 1960s was never plain sailing. Following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Rhodesia in 1965, different thinking and approaches on handling the racist Rhodesian regime emerged. Britain was headed by Harold

Wilson (1964-70) who engineered sanctions against Rhodesia as a retaliatory measure for UDI. The argument from African National Congress and National Democratic Party was that sanctions alone were not adequate to deal with the renegade and irredentist state of Rhodesia. Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda (UNIP) and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere (CCM) led talks advocating military action as an effective way of eliminating Rhodesia from the citadel of power. Mugabe's guerrilla fighters put up a very strong case for military action against the Rhodesia Front. That plan was rejected by Harold Wilson who adopted a soft approach. The British government was accused of patronage as they were not prepared to see 'the use of force against their kith and kin' (Miles-Tendi 2014).

A further strain on the relations as of that time was that the Wilson government maintained the 'no to majority rule' tenet but kept an open policy on Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front and UDI. This was widely viewed as a tacit approval of the UDI by Britain. Liberation movements working on decolonisation process perceived Wilson's policy as designed to maintain the status quo. According to Wood (2012), Harold Wilson's intransigence "incensed Mugabe and other Zimbabwean nationalist leaders [like Ndabaningi Sithole, James Chikerema, Joshua Nkomo, Josiah Chinamano and Herbert Chitepo and Maurice Nyagumbo] ...and it forced them to resort to an armed struggle to defeat Rhodesian settler colonialism...". As observed by Ranger (2013), had UDI not been allowed to blossom from 1965 – with Wilson's blessing – the war of liberation would have been averted.

From a different angle, it is worth noting that perpetuation of excessive violence against colonised people is what Chancellor (1987) regards as a 'seminal recapitulation of how colonial conquests paved way for [the] destruction of black civilisation'. Translated to Rhodesian coloniality and repression, we can argue that the soft approach towards Ian Smith mooted by Wilson's British government was an act of genocide. This is so because the escalation and onslaught against innocent civilians by Rhodesia military allowed massacres to occur in Nyadzonya, Tembwe, Lusaka and Chimoio. These war crimes have never been fully investigated. Our belief is

that the British government should be held to account for this genocide and the question of compensation should not be ruled out.

Judging from historical developments mentioned above, Mugabe was sensitively aware of New Labour's hostile attitude towards Zimbabwe when Tony Blair came to power in 1997. As pointed out earlier Claire Short, in consultation with the then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, was tasked to handle Zimbabwe's demands for land restitution. By way of a brief background, Claire Short grew up as a troubled teenager who supported the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The IRA was accused of perpetuating the worst violence in Britain in living memory through its Irish Republican paramilitary activities in Northern Ireland Troubles. What is important is that in 1997, the IRA split into a Dissident Irish Republicans, a breakaway group opposed to ceasefire to continue with armed campaigns against the British security forces in Northern Ireland. Tony Blair needed to woo the dissidents from where Claire Short hailed to the negotiating table. Short's appointment to cabinet was strategic and very significant in 1997. She was appointed by Tony Blair as the International Development Secretary, a portfolio in which she had to deal with African and developing countries – and in particular, Zimbabwe's land reform transition. .

According to Miles-Tendi ('Mugabe, thus, formed a negative perception of Labour in 1965 and the ahistorical 'do good' approach exhibited in Short's 1997 letter reaffirmed his unfavourable view of the [Labour] party. The letter addressed to the Minister of Agriculture, Kumbirai Kangai in part read as follows:

...I should make it clear that we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new Government from diverse backgrounds without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and as you know we were colonised not colonisers...

It is at that point that Mugabeism doctrine took off the ground, couched in openly anti-British and anti-Blair style. Mugabe immediately saw that the goal posts had shifted and went for the kill

by proclaiming to ‘instil fear into the Whiteman’/ ‘Do they [whites] know where their ancestors came from? ...The British who are here (in Zimbabwe) should go back to England...We now have aeroplanes which can take them quicker than the ships used by their ancestors...’ (Chimbange, Mukenge and Mutambwa, 2013).

The question of restitution and responsibility was a constitutional matter which had been agreed at Lancaster House Conference in 1979. Furthermore, it was not in dispute that the Conservative government had provided financial support for the initial phase of Zimbabwe land reform during the 1980s (Alexander, 2006). (A full letter by Short, ‘How it all started’, appears in *New African Magazine*, of March 2002).

Short’s letter was analysed by the ZANU PF government who perceived its contents as downright condescending and objectionable. Her allusions to her personal experience of being an Irish added impetus and credibility to accusations of patronage. Short’s stance created the impression of spirited attempts to absolve imperial Britain from wrongdoing – years back in colonising the indigenous people into subjects of the empire. Her ‘diverse’ background as defined in colonial configurations was a strategy designed to limit and neutralise the racial banalities of racist Britain. Narratives from Hickman (1995) submit that through the long history of British colonialism in Ireland and Irish migration to Britain, “the Irish have been constructed as the ‘other’ in opposition to the formation of a hegemonic British national identity”. This was seized upon by President Mugabe as he warned of using a long spoon when supping with the devil.

Ndlovu- Gatsheni (2009) observes that the fallout between Mugabe and Blair was further exacerbated by the British imposition of an arms embargo against Zimbabwe in May 2000. This was accompanied by the UK’s decision to stop supplying Land Rovers to the Zimbabwe Republic Police, withdrawal of the British Military Advisory Training Team, and cutting of aid to Zimbabwe by one-third. Mugabe was further angered by Blair’s active role in the decision of the European Union to implement ‘targeted sanctions’ against the government of Zimbabwe on 18 January 2002. This

included the imposition of an asset freeze and travel ban on Mugabe and his senior party officials; an embargo on the sale or transfer of arms and technical advice. Blair further infuriated Mugabe through his close relationship with George Bush, who in December 2001 had signed into law the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Bill that introduced sanctions against senior Zimbabwe government officials. Mugabe blamed Blair for having played a central role in making sure Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth in March 2002.

Armed with Claire Short's blunt intervention strategies, Mugabe accused Blair's government of being the brains behind the creation and sponsorship of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change as its running dog of imperialism, aimed at achieving 'regime change' and facilitating the re-colonisation of Zimbabwe²² (The Herald, 6 December 1997). During the 1998 Land Donor Conference, Claire Short accused Mugabe of corruption by refusing 'terms of open and transparent land reform' because 'that would stop him from using land as a political tool in the 2000 Parliamentary elections'. In election campaign rallies that followed, President Mugabe used political rhetoric and demonization of British interference to his advantage. The 'Blair keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe' speech was well received even by members of opposition political parties who admired his nationalist principles and consistent stance on the land question²³. Mugabeism is situated in the post-independence and post-modernist era of scholarship. Mugabeism is characterised by resistance to white domination and oppression; raising black consciousness and worth; equality of peoples; reverence and veneration of elders, ancestors and liberation heroes and heroines; fighting against colonialism and neo-

²² The Herald, 6 December 1997

²³ In an interview with MDC Member of Parliament and Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Mr Tendai Biti in 2010, he heaped a lot of praises on President Mugabe, stating that he was on 'very good personal terms' with him. Biti maintained throughout this interview that Mugabe was 'a nice man', 'a father figure' and 'very cerebral' - ruminating that 'people will see his greatness when he is gone'. Minister Biti said 'he had been lucky to have the privilege of working with President Robert Mugabe in the inclusive government'.

colonialism; and upholding of African values and African unity in a quest for self-determination. Mugabeism resists political puppetry and cherishes patriotism to self, the party and country. It appeals to those who experienced the atrocities, brutality and the ruthlessness of logics, systems and technologies of colonialism and apartheid and demanding to assert their African-ness and visibility. Mugabeism is an anti-imperialist struggle couched in the war and use of rhetoric and demonization dialogue.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a chronicle of the three waves of Chimurenga, namely the colonial era of the 1890s in which settlers expropriated land from 'native' Africans without compensation. From thereon, we witness the period in which 'native' Zimbabweans fought hard to regain back their land. The struggles came to be known as Chimurenga. The second watershed entails a dark phase of history in which the settler Rhodesian regime Declared Independence through UDI in November 1965. This resulted in the imposition of punitive sanctions as desired by the British government for Rhodesian defiance of the British Crown. The second phase is a build-up of African nationalism in which they took arms to fight for their land resulting in negotiated Lancaster House constitution that gave birth to Zimbabwe in 1980. The third phase of "Chimurenga War of Liberation" known as "Hondo Yeminda" in local terms started in 2001 when the ZANU-PF government promulgated legislation for land reforms. This is the point at which Britain lobbied for sanctions to be imposed on Zimbabwe. There are mixed views about this phase: For others, it postulates Mugabeism as anti-colonial and anti-imperialist stance – some kind of defiance. For others, it defines Mugabe as a brutal and iron fisted dictator who was ruthless with his opponents including Western governments and the EU, who implemented economic sanctions and individual restrictive measures.

The re-assertion of demands for equality, African-ness and African unity reflect the loathing of colonial domination and a quest for self-determination. By resolving the land question, Zimbabwe

engaged in a long process of anti-colonial resistances and political struggles aimed at reversing exploitation of economic resources by the West. It is also a creation of new spaces in the discourse and exchange of ideas on strengthening self-rule and true independence designed to empower indigenous populations that suffered from residual and cumulative effects of colonialism. This is a transcript of a struggle from where other countries will read some of the formulas for land reform programme through re-acquisition and re-possession without regret. For Zimbabweans to achieve total liberation, it is necessary to go through the process of decolonizing the mind and soul.

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Arguably, one of the most polarising figures in modern times has been Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the former President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. The mere mentioning of his name raises a lot of debate and often times vicious, if not irreconcilable differences, both in Zimbabwe and beyond. In an article titled: 'Lessons of Zimbabwe', Mahmood Mamdani succinctly captures the polarity thus: 'It is hard to think of a figure more reviled in the West than Robert Mugabe... and his land reform measures, however harsh, have won him considerable popularity, not just in Zimbabwe but throughout southern Africa.' This, together with his recent 'stylised' ouster, speaks volumes to his conflicted legacy. The divided opinion on Mugabe's legacy can broadly be represented, first, by those who consider him as a champion of African liberation, a Pan-Africanist, an unmatched revolutionary and an avid anti-imperialist who, literally, 'spoke the truth' to Western imperialists. On the other end of the spectrum are those who – seemingly paying scant regard to the predicament of millions of black Zimbabweans brutally dispossessed of their land and human dignity since the Rhodesian days – have differentially characterised Mugabe as a rabid black fascist, an anti-white racist, an oppressor, and a dictator. Drawing on all these opinions and characterisations, the chapters ensconced in this volume critically reflect on the personality, leadership style and contributions of Robert Mugabe during his time in office, from 1980 to November 2017. The volume is timely in view of the current contested transition in Zimbabwe, and with regard to the ongoing consultations on the Land Question in neighbouring South Africa. It is a handy and richly documented text for students and practitioners in political science, African studies, economics, policy studies, development studies, and global studies.

MUNYARADZI MAWERE is a Professor in the Simon Muzenda School of Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies at Great Zimbabwe University.

NGONIDZASHE MARONGWE is a Lecturer in the History and Development Studies Department, Simon Muzenda School of Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies, Great Zimbabwe University

FIDELIS PETER THOMAS DURI is a Senior Lecturer of History in the Department of Archaeology, Culture and Heritage, History and Development Studies at Great Zimbabwe University.



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